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MISSION CITY RECORD

Olympic bait set out for car thieves

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By Jeff Nagel

Black Press

Police plan to flood park-and-ride lots with bait cars during the Olympics to foil auto thieves seeking to prey on Games-goers.

Bait cars will be planted at all 22 park-and-rides as well as Olympic Bus Network parking and departure hubs.

Many will also contain bait property – cameras, laptops and the like marked with new microdot DNA technology to easily identify stolen items later and provide indisputable court evidence.

“Note to thieves: the Games are not your ticket to easy pickings,” said Sgt. Gord Elias of the Integrated Municipal Provincial Auto Crime Team (IMPACT).

“Anywhere you see a lot of cars, there will be bait cars. Steal one and you will go to jail.”

An estimated 250,000 more people a day will take public transit during the Olympics, many of them parking their vehicles to board SkyTrain, and Solicitor General Kash Heed said stepped-up measures should provide them more peace of mind.

Police will also be using cars equipped with automated licence plate scanners to scan up to 600 plates an hour in search of stolen vehicles during the Olympics.

A combination of advanced policing technology and tactics are continuing to put car thieves on the run in the Lower Mainland.

The region recorded 8,000 car thefts last year, down by 1,000 or 12 per cent from 2008.

And it's a 61-per-cent drop from 2003, when the auto theft epidemic peaked with 21,000 stolen vehicles reported across the region.



Police catch a suspected bait car thief.

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"We've really turned the heat up on the car thieves," Sgt. Gord Elias of the Integrated Municipal Provincial Auto Crime Team (IMPACT).

"A lot of them have decided it's just not worth stealing cars any more."

Bait cars and automated licence plate scanning have both helped, as has intelligence-based policing with much greater use of crime analysts to track trends.

"We're policing a lot smarter than we used to," Elias said. "Before we head out on the road every day, we know who's in jail, who's out of jail, who's the most active, where the hotspots are, what types of cars are being stolen and what times of day they're being stolen."

When a car thief is on the run, the Air One or Air Two police helicopters can be called in, as well as police dogs if a suspect flees on foot.

Surrey recorded 2,590 car thefts last year, by far the most of any city in B.C.

That was a two per cent drop from 2008 and down 52 per cent from 2003.

Thefts from cars also dropped 16 per cent last and have fallen 53 per cent from 2003 in the Lower Mainland.

IMPACT also released its new list of the top 10 suspects wanted for car theft.

Three are wanted in Surrey: 18-year-old Jamie R. Crosson; Jason Foster Chysyk, 39, and described as a very active car thief in the Surrey area; and Justin Mathew Little, 29, who is also wanted in Burnaby and Langley.

Shane Richard Trotter, wanted by North Vancouver, is now believed to be active in the North Delta area and has 31 convictions since 1993.

Brian Robert Stephan, 24, is also wanted in Chilliwack and is considered armed and dangerous.

Others wanted include: Daniel Joseph Perrault, 41, by Vancouver; Cory Evan Ballod, 32, by Sooke/Saanich police and described as "a one-man wrecking crew"; Dhilan Amos Zermeno, 24, by Victoria police; Donald George Tindall, 52, wanted by Kelowna; and Kalvin Douglas McCurdy, 18, wanted by IMPACT.

Police say the typical profile for a B.C. car thief is a drug-addicted male in his late 20s with a long criminal record who uses a stolen car to commit a crime to get more drugs.

View slideshow of all the top 10 wanted on www.bclocalnews.com.

2009 AUTO THEFTS

- Abbotsford: 500
- Burnaby: 740
- Chilliwack: 290
- Coquitlam: 310
- Delta: 180
- Langley: 550
- Maple Ridge: 280
- Mission: 190
- New Westminster: 260
- North Vancouver: 170
- Port Coquitlam: 150
- Port Moody: 40
- Richmond: 310
- Surrey: 2,590
- Vancouver: 1,400
- West Vancouver: 30

TOP 10 STOLEN CARS IN METRO VANCOUVER

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- Honda Civic – 1995, 2000
- Dodge Caravan/Plymouth Voyager – 1994, 1995
- Honda Accord – 1990, 1992
- Ford F-Series pickups – 2005, 2006
- Jeep Cherokee – 1993, 1994
- Toyota Camry – 1987, 1988
- Dodge/Plymouth Neon – 1995, 1998
- Dodge Ram pickup – 1995, 1998
- Toyota Corolla – 2006
- Ford Taurus – 1997, 1998

TOP 10 ITEMS

STOLEN FROM

VEHICLES

- GPS systems
- Laptop computers
- CDs
- Stereo equipment – CD players, amps, speakers, subwoofers
- Coins
- Registration papers
- Garage door openers
- Cellphones, portable DVDs and iPods
- Work tools
- Tires and wheels

TOP WAYS TO

PROTECT YOUR

VEHICLE

- Install an immobilizer.
- Always use a steering wheel lock if you have no immobilizer.
- Always close windows and lock doors.
- Take possessions with you and don't leave anything in your car.
- Keep spare keys in your wallet, not your car.
- Avoid parking behind fences or hedges.
- At home use a motion-sensor light for your driveway. Elsewhere, park in well-lit areas near pedestrian traffic.
- After opening an automatic gate to underground parking, watch out for thieves waiting to slip inside. Wait for the gate to close behind you.
- Engrave your stereo or other on-board valuables with your driver's licence number.
- When fueling your vehicle, ensure you have your vehicle's key with you at all times and lock your vehicle if going inside.

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