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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

### **CAR OWNERS WIN AS AUTO CRIME PLUMMETS DURING GAMES**

VICTORIA – Strategically placed bait cars helped send vehicle thefts downhill to a 14-year low during the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, Solicitor General Michael de Jong, QC, announced today.

“We warned car thieves that bait cars would be everywhere during the Games, and it appears they got the message,” said de Jong. “This success is all the more impressive given the number of visitors’ vehicles in B.C. during this time – not to mention that there are about 400,000 more vehicles on Metro Vancouver roads than there were in 1996.”

The February 2010 provincial totals – 730 vehicle thefts and 1,335 auto break-ins – were 64 and 71 per cent lower respectively than the 2,030 thefts and 4,645 break-ins in February 1996. Compared to February of last year, there were 210 or 22-per-cent fewer thefts and 680 or 15-per-cent fewer break-ins in February 2010.

“Our priority was to ensure that hundreds of thousands of visitors didn’t mean more opportunities for car thieves,” said Sgt. Gord Elias of the Integrated Municipal Provincial Auto Crime Team (IMPACT). “Our message to thieves was clear: we would not sit back and allow them to detract from people’s Olympic experience.”

IMPACT’s strategy included deploying bait cars at Park & Rides, five VANOC parking and departure hubs, and Games Training and Preparation Centres. Many bait cars displayed cameras and laptops marked with new MicroDot DNA technology, which helps police track stolen goods and provides indisputable evidence in court. As well, IMPACT analyzed auto-crime data daily to guide its strategic deployment of bait cars and surveillance teams, and used undercover cars equipped with automatic licence plate recognition technology to scan plates and locate stolen vehicles in parking lots and on the road.

“These are remarkable results and we credit drivers for making smart decisions,” said Nicolas Jimenez, ICBC’s director of road safety. “Whether they were leaving cars at home, parking in secure and well-lit areas, removing valuables or locking their vehicles, drivers helped make communities safer during the Games and will help us keep our rates low and stable.”

Since bait cars hit B.C. roads in 2004, ICBC’s stolen vehicle claims have been cut in half, to \$47 million in 2009 from \$98 million in 2003, while break-in-related claim costs have fallen to \$17 million from \$27 million. ICBC invested about \$2.6 million in auto-crime enforcement, prevention and awareness efforts last year, including IMPACT.

For more information on IMPACT's Bait Car program, go to [baitcar.com](http://baitcar.com). For auto theft statistics and avoidance tips, visit [www.icbc.com](http://www.icbc.com) online.

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