
Sponsor: Sheriff's Office

Meeting Date: 6/15/2021

Title: Grant Award from Minnesota Department of Commerce for Minnesota Auto Theft Prevention Program - Dedicated Investigator, Training and Equipment.

File Number: 2021-303

Background and Rationale:

This board action is one of three requests related to auto theft prevention grants from the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Commerce Fraud Bureau, Minnesota Auto Theft Prevention Program. Both the Sheriff's Office and County Attorney's Office applied for and were awarded four grant funds from the Minnesota Auto Theft Prevention Program for the next two state fiscal years (July 1 to June 30).

The Minnesota Automobile Theft Prevention Program is intended to reduce auto theft and auto theft related crimes. Under this state program, grant funds are awarded for programs and services that aid in the reduction of auto thefts, increase education and awareness of the community, respond to auto theft incidents, and prosecute offenders. This grant, administered by the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Commerce Fraud Bureau, provides financial support to communities that (1) engage in collaborative efforts to reduce auto theft and (2) have the greatest rates of automobile theft.

Ramsey County has some of the greatest auto theft rates in the state:

- Ramsey County accounts for 9% of the state's population, but 28% of its auto thefts.
- Of the 417 law enforcement agencies in Minnesota, only six agencies responded to more auto thefts in 2019 than the Sheriff's Office.
- In the past year, approximately 40% of persons involved in auto thefts in Ramsey County were under the age of 25.
- Recent data suggests an increase in auto vehicle thefts accompanied by a more serious charge of aggravated robbery or assault (i.e., "car-jacking").
- Incidents of car-jackings in Ramsey County have mostly involved individuals operating as a group and under the age of 25.
- From 2018-2020, the number of juvenile auto-theft cases referred to the County Attorney's Office increased nearly 25%, accompanied by an increase in repetitive criminal conduct.

This board action approves the Dedicated Auto Theft Investigator Grant and the General Auto Theft Prevention Grant for the Sheriff's Office. The Dedicated Auto Theft Investigator Grant provides funding for a dedicated auto theft investigator and training. The General Auto Theft Prevention grant provides funding for overtime and equipment. These two grants will primarily serve the communities who contract with the Sheriff's Office for patrol, investigation, and community services: Arden Hills, Falcon Heights, Little Canada, North Oaks, Shoreview, Vadnais Heights, and White Bear Township. The number of auto thefts in these communities increased 47% between 2019 and 2020.

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Ratify the Auto Theft Prevention grant applications to the Minnesota Department of Commerce.
2. Accept a grant award of \$283,745 and approve a grant agreement with the Minnesota Department of Commerce for Auto Theft Prevention - Dedicated Personnel and Training for the period of July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2023.
3. Authorize the County Manager to execute future Auto Theft Prevention grants, in a form approved by the County Attorney's Office, through December 31, 2026.
4. Approve an increase in the personnel complement of the Sheriff's Office by 1.0 Full Time Equivalent Deputy Sheriff.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner MatasCastillo, seconded by Commissioner Reinhardt.

Motion passed.

Aye: - 7: Carter, Frethem, MatasCastillo, McDonough, McGuire, Ortega, and Reinhardt

By: _____



Abby Goldsmith, Interim Chief Clerk - County Board