

Significant Statistics during Calendar Year 2017

Sheriff's Combined Auto Theft Task Force

Recovered Stolen Vehicles:	359
Value of Recovered Vehicles:	\$5,066,040
Auto Theft Cases Cleared:	732
Persons arrested for Auto Theft:	64
Burglary of Vehicle Cases Cleared:	260
Persons arrested for Burglary of Vehicle:	23
Perform 68A Inspections:	1,681
Conduct Inspections of Salvage Yards/Repair Shops/etc:	54
Conduct Bait Operations targeting Theft:	108
Conduct Bait Operations targeting Burglary of Vehicle:	31
Conduct Interdictions:	425
Attend Community Events to provide education:	33

Significant Activities during Calendar Year 2017

January 2017

Bell County Agent:

During the month of January 2017, the Bell County Agent received multiple requests from the Bell County Fire Marshall's Office to assist them in identifying burned vehicles. The first request was on January 9th, and was in regards to a 2005 Chevy 1500 pickup that was located in the vicinity of Stillhouse Hollow Lake. The second vehicle was discovered in northern Bell County on January 11th, and was identified as a 2012 BMW X5 SUV. A third vehicle was located just south of Killeen, Texas, and was found to be a 2001 Ford F250 pickup. The Bell County Agent continues to assist the Bell County Fire Marshall's Office and the Texas Department of Public Safety on these investigations, and he is working to determine if there is any evidence linking these crimes to one another.

Jackson County Agent:

On January 24th, 2017, the Jackson County Agent was contacted in reference to a 2003 Case backhoe owned by a local business. This backhoe had broken down while on a job, requiring parts to be ordered. The mechanic who responded observed that the Pin Number to the machine had been altered and removed. The Agent responded to view the machine in a public location, and verified that the Pin number was altered, at which time it was seized pending investigation.

Over the course of the investigation, it has been determined that this machine was owned by HOLT and previously rented to a construction company in San Antonio, where it was then reported as stolen. It was recovered in 2006, where it was turned over to the insurance company in Arlington, Texas. While waiting to hear back from the insurance company on what actions they took with the machine after it was returned to them, evidence was located indicating the machine was potentially owned and serviced at one time by a company located in Corpus Christi, where it was possibly stolen around 2014. The Jackson County Agent has learned that a supervisor at the original local business was previously fired from the Corpus Christi business for material theft. At the time, he was in charge of servicing and maintaining similar equipment, so would have had access and means to alter the Pin numbers and steal the backhoe. This is still an active case and the investigation continues.

Travis County Agent:

During the month of January 2017, a Travis County Agent received two separate reports of auto theft within a week timeframe. These reports indicated that there one a single suspect behind both of the crimes. This suspect was identified during the first auto theft, but due to circumstances at the scene he was allowed to depart without arrest. A week later, this same suspect took advantage of a passing motorist's hospitality by stealing his vehicle after the driver had provided the suspect a ride to a gas station. He then proceeded to use this stolen vehicle to drive to a residence, which he burglarized.

Law enforcement got into a chase with this suspect, but he abandoned the vehicle and fled on foot, avoiding capture. The Travis County Agent managed to review evidence left in this second stolen vehicle which positively

identified the suspect, and linked him to both auto thefts. At this time, the suspect has warrants active for his arrest on both the first and the second auto theft.

Community Liaison:

On January 20th, 2017, the Community Liaison took possession of the Public Awareness Vehicle from the vendor who designed the vehicle wrap. The wrap focuses on the proud traditions of Texas by boldly displaying the Texas Flag, with subtle but distinct use of ABTPA logos. This will allow the Sheriff's Combined Auto Theft Task Force to resume our 'rolling education' campaign, making appearances not just on Central Texas roadways, but at automotive-related events, shopping plazas, and public venues. It made its very first appearance at a show in Bee Caves, Texas just two days after returning from the vendor.



February 2017

Bell County Agent:

In the month of February, the Bell County Agent was assigned a theft of an ATV case. The unidentified suspect had entered a cabin on a ranch located in Salado, Texas, where he stole the ATV without the owner's consent. Investigative leads resulted in the ATV being located on a Craigslist advertisement for sale. The Agent researched the address and located the ATV, as well as identified a suspect on the scene. The case is currently still under active investigation.

Hays County Agent:

On February 21st, 2017 the Hays County Agent obtained information about a residence where stolen motorcycles were possibly being stored. Upon arrival, numerous motorcycles, motorcycle parts, dismantled vehicles, trailers and miscellaneous equipment was observed. Consent was received by the property owner to look at the motorcycles. This inspection resulted in two stolen motorcycles being identified.

During this process, it was learned that Narcotics Officers had been conducting surveillance on the residence for illegal activities. A Search Warrant was obtained for both the residence as well as the property. Once obtained, additional inspections were conducted by the Agent, resulting in two stolen Skid Loaders and a stolen Trailer being recovered, in addition to the two stolen motorcycles. A Warrant was issued for one suspect in relation to the stolen motorcycles, and the investigation continues on the stolen Skid Loaders and Trailer. The location has been determined to be a Chop Shop.

Travis County Agent:

On February 14th, 2017 a Travis County Patrol Deputy conducted a traffic stop on a 2003 Cadillac for expired temporary license plates. Through previous training provided by the Travis County Agents, the deputy was able to identify the vehicle as a Salvage Vehicle and that it was being operated illegally. The Patrol Deputy's report was forwarded to the Travis County Agent, where further investigation revealed the vehicle had been purchased from a local used car dealership located in Austin, Texas.

An Administrative Salvage Inspection was conducted at the business, which showed it to be run poorly, with numerous administrative deficiencies notated in the Agent's report. Collaboration with TX DMV Enforcement section revealed that DMV had two ongoing administrative investigations active on this business. It is plausible that the business may face sanctions in the near future resulting from this collaborative effort. A warrant was issued for the manager of the business for selling a salvage vehicle to a customer and allowing the customer to drive away in the vehicle.

March 2017

Comal County Agent:

During the month of March, the Comal County Agent had two significant events. The Agent received a request from New Braunfels Police Department to assist them in the execution of a search warrant. He utilized his training and experience to identify two stolen 2017 Ford vehicles which had been stolen from a local car dealership. The investigation revealed that the dealership was unaware the vehicles had even been stolen. There were two suspects identified and arrest from this case.

The second significant event involved working closely with the Northeast Texas Auto Theft Task Force. While working interdiction duties, the Agent identified and recovered two stolen semi-trailers, one of which was a 2017 Transcraft. By investigating and sharing information with agents in the Northeast Texas Auto Theft Task Force, a suspect was able to be successfully identified in this case. It is still active at this time.

Bell Co Agent:

The Bell Co Agent utilized Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR) data on numerous occasions during this reporting period. On three particular dates, (March 09, March 16, and March 17), the Agent received ALPR notifications that there were stolen vehicles potentially scanned in the vicinity. On each occasion, the Bell Co Agent responded promptly to the respective locations, and was able to locate each of the vehicles. All three vehicles were successfully recovered, and in one of the cases, there is follow-up investigation being conducted for potential video evidence from a business. Automatic License Plate Reader technology continues to prove a highly valuable asset in locating and ultimately recovering stolen vehicles.

Travis Co Agent:

On March 22, 2017, Travis County Patrol Deputies were taking a report of a stolen Caterpillar Backhoe in western Travis County. During this process, they learned it was equipped with a tracking device. They promptly notified the Travis County Agents, who began their investigation. The equipment tracked to a large wooded ranch in far eastern Travis County. Upon arrival, it was located abandoned and in good condition, making it available to be returned to the owner. The estimated value of the Backhoe was \$90,000.

On March 30, 2017, Travis Co Agents deployed a bait trailer with a motorcycle on it in the southeastern area of Travis County., in an attempt to combat thefts from that section of the county. The trailer, along with the motorcycle, was stolen later that same afternoon. Utilizing technology deployed with the trailer, agents were quickly able to locate and recover the stolen trailer and motorcycle, and apprehend and arrest two subjects. One of the subjects had a prior felony theft conviction.

April 2017

Bell Co Agent:

The Bell Co Agent had several significant events during this reporting period. During the months of March and April, two communities experienced a surge in burglary of motor vehicle and auto theft cases. Six vehicles were stolen during the commission of car burglaries where the keys were left in unlocked vehicles. There were also 13 vehicle burglaries during this same time frame. A break in the case occurred when the Bell Co Agent obtained information that one of the vehicles stolen was equipped with a Fleetmatics GPS system. The Agent obtained a print out of the vehicle's route, and observed it making a stop at a nearby convenience store. This information was used to obtain video footage from the store, which showed two juvenile suspects linked to the vehicle. They suspects were located and interviewed, and subsequently confessed to stealing five of the six vehicles. In addition, they confessed to eight of the vehicle burglaries. The case was referred for prosecution, and a total of thirteen cases were cleared.

On April 03, 2017, the Bell Co Agent was contacted by the Texas Department of Public Safety to request assistance in executing a search warrant. The Bell County Agent checked ten vehicles, and successfully identified a stolen 2012 Chevrolet 1500 truck and a 2009 River Forest Tailwind trailer. The suspect was arrested on a Parole Violation, and the case remains under investigation.

On April 20, 2017, the Bell Co Agent was requested to assist the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms in serving a federal search warrant. The warrant stemmed from information the Agent had previously obtained while interviewing a suspect in two thefts of vehicle cases and an arson case. The suspect reportedly had information to provide ATF on a residence involved in trafficking stolen vehicles, explosives and guns. During the search, the Bell Co Agent checked nineteen vehicles and several pieces of equipment. He identified a 2005 Mazda MPV minivan with the interior stripped which had been reported stolen in 2015. The case remains under investigation.

Travis Co Agent: Travis Co Sergeant utilized LoJack hits to recover two stolen vehicles. One vehicle recovered is a 2013 Ford F150. During this recovery three suspects were seen working on the stolen vehicle and subsequently fled from the scene on foot when confronted by Auto Theft. One of the suspects was located and arrested/charged with Theft F-2. The second vehicle is a 2015 Ford F-150 which was located abandoned in a neighborhood. No suspects have been identified in this case and both cases remain under investigation.

Community Liaison/Multiple Agents:

On April 06, 2017, the Community Liaison, along with five Agents, participated in a large-scale Vehicle Report Card Initiative at the Camp Hubbard Campus of the Texas Department of Vehicles in Austin, Texas. One of the goals of this initiative was to showcase not only some of the public awareness campaigns the task force conducts, but to educate a large group of employees in the public sector. The results were presented the following day to the employees on the campus, as well as streamed across the State on TxDMVs intranet broadcast. This resulted in both the ABTPA and the task force being contacted by persons requesting more information about the program and about prevention methods they can undertake themselves. A total of 528 vehicles were inspected during this initiative.

May 2017

Bell Co Agent:

The Bell Co Agent organized a large scale event during this reporting period. From May 17th through May 19th the Sheriff's Combined Auto Theft Task Force conducted a License Plate Recognition Interdiction Operation in Bell County under the supervision of the Task Force Commander and Bell Co Agent. During this operation, eight agents were deployed along with four vehicles which were equipped with LPR technology. In addition, five marked Bell County Sheriff's Office Interdiction units assisted. The operation coincided with the 2017 Harley Owners Group Motorcycle Rally which was taking place during this timeframe.

The operation netted the recovery of three stolen vehicles with a combined recovery value of \$57,609. The first vehicle recovered was a 2014 Ford Mustang reported stolen through Killeen Police Department and valued at \$22,400. The second vehicle recovered was a 2014 Kia Optima stolen through the Austin Police Department and valued at \$17,500. The third recovery was a 2015 Nissan Sentra reported through the Killeen Police Department with a value of \$17,709. In addition to the recovered vehicles, agents seized two stolen license plates during this timeframe, as well as assisted the Killeen Police Department and the Salado Police Department.

In addition to this operation, the Bell Co Agent received two separate LPR Notification alerts and successfully located the respective stolen vehicles, (a Buick Enclave SUV and a GMC Sonoma pickup).

Comal Co Agent:

During the month of May, the Comal County Agent recovered two stolen and altered semi-trailers while working Interdiction. One of those trailers was identified as a 2016 Great Dane reefer with a value of \$80,000 which had been reported stolen from the state of Florida approximately six months prior. At the time of the theft, the trailer was fully loaded with \$70,000 of produce. During the investigation, the Comal Co Agent was able to successfully identify a prime suspect located in Florida. Contact was made with a Miami, Florida task force so that collaboration could begin. The agent learned this recovered trailer was part of a larger theft involving three semi-trucks and three semi-trailers, with a total loss valued at \$862,000. The investigation is ongoing with the follow-up being conducted by the Miami, Florida area task force.

June 2017

Bell Co Agent:

On Wednesday June 14th 2017, the Bell Co Agent obtained information of a vehicle pulling a trailer with possible stolen property inside of it. The vehicle was found to be unoccupied, and a check of the 2007 Chevrolet 2500 Pickup VIN showed it was an active stolen reported through the Temple Police Department. Further investigation revealed that the Texas Bragg trailer, two acetylene tanks, a miller welder, a Hausfeld air compressor and a Raven Arms handgun were items from a burglary of a building reported earlier that morning to the Bell County Sheriff's Office. Investigation continues at this time.

On Wednesday June 28th 2017, the Bell Co Agent was contact by a Travis Co Agent. The Travis Co Agent had obtained information of a possible VIN swap vehicle from a likely Chop Shop investigation he was conducting. The Bell Co Agent, with the assistance of a Texas DPS Special Agent, responded to the scene and observed that the VIN on the vehicle, (a 2005 Dodge Ram 2500), had been swapped with the VIN belonging to a 2004 Dodge Ram 2500. The vehicle was seized pending further investigation. (See Travis Co Agent Activities below).

Comal Co Agent:

During the month of June, the Comal Co Agent recovered two stolen and altered semi-trailers while working Interdiction. Of particular interest in this case was that one of the stolen semi-trailers had been stolen for four years, and the victim did not realize it had been stolen the entire time until they were contacted by the Comal Co Agent. The victim company has a large fleet of 800-900 trailers and did not know it was missing from their inventory. This is not an uncommon scenario for large companies.

Travis Co Agent:

On Tuesday June 6th 2017, three Travis Co Agents, along with the Bastrop Co Agent responded to a request from the Travis County Fire Marshall in helping to identify a vehicle in an arson case. The vehicle was a complete burn, with no public identification numbers being present. After approximately five hours of investigation, the Agents were able to successfully identify the vehicle, learning that it was reported as stolen in a City of Austin case. The arson case is still under investigation by the Fire Marshall.

During the month of June, a Travis Co Agent worked with an informant to learn of a location in Travis County which was potentially selling stolen vehicles and stolen parts. During the investigation, the suspect associated with the shop was linked to a known Chop Shop where Agents had previously executed a search warrant. It appears the location had resumed business. To date, the Travis Co Agent has been able to link one stolen vehicle

with a VIN Swap which was sold to an innocent buyer in Bell County, one stripped vehicle, and one fresh stolen vehicle. The investigation continues with additional resources to identify other co-conspirators and locations involved in this criminal enterprise.

July 2017

Travis Co Agent:

During the month of July, a Travis Co Agent spent a great amount of time conducting surveillance, gathering information from informants, and collaborating with the Austin Police Department regarding an ongoing Auto Theft and VIN Swap Investigation. Due to this work, probable cause was developed allowing for the issuance of a tracking device order, enabling the Agent to deploy a device on one of the suspect's vehicles. Agents are continuing to conduct surveillance to determine additional involved locations and subject in this criminal enterprise.

August 2017

Comal Co Agent:

On August 16, 2017 at approximately 0130 hours, the Comal Co Agent was working Interdiction. While conducting a traffic stop for displaying a fictitious license plate, the Agent observed several burglary tools in the vehicle. Upon further investigation, the driver could not produce a rental agreement for a U-Haul trailer he was towing, and changed his story on several occasions. The Agent was able to learn the U-Haul and its contents, consisting of two Harley Davidson motorcycles and a Kawasaki motorcycle, had recently been reported as stolen from the Austin, Texas area. While taking the driver into custody, the passenger fled the scene, but was able to be identified. The suspect has an extensive criminal history including Federal and State prison times, and is currently on parole through 2020. His Dodge 4x4 pickup was seized pending further investigation.

On August 19, 2017, the Comal Co Agent initiated a traffic stop on a reckless driver. The suspect refused to pull over, and a pursuit began. The driver tried to evade for approximately 44 minutes, and speeds exceeded 100mph on numerous occasions. During the pursuit, the suspect attempted to ram his 2011 Dodge truck into both the Comal Co Agent as well as another deputy who was assisting. The situation escalated when the suspect began shooting out of his truck at the Comal Co Agent. One bullet was confirmed to have struck the Agent's vehicle. At the conclusion of the incident, the suspect had crashed and totaled his vehicle, and was taken into custody. He faces numerous charges, and the case remains under review at this time. The Comal Co Agent and the second deputy received no major injuries during this dangerous ordeal.

Travis Co Agent:

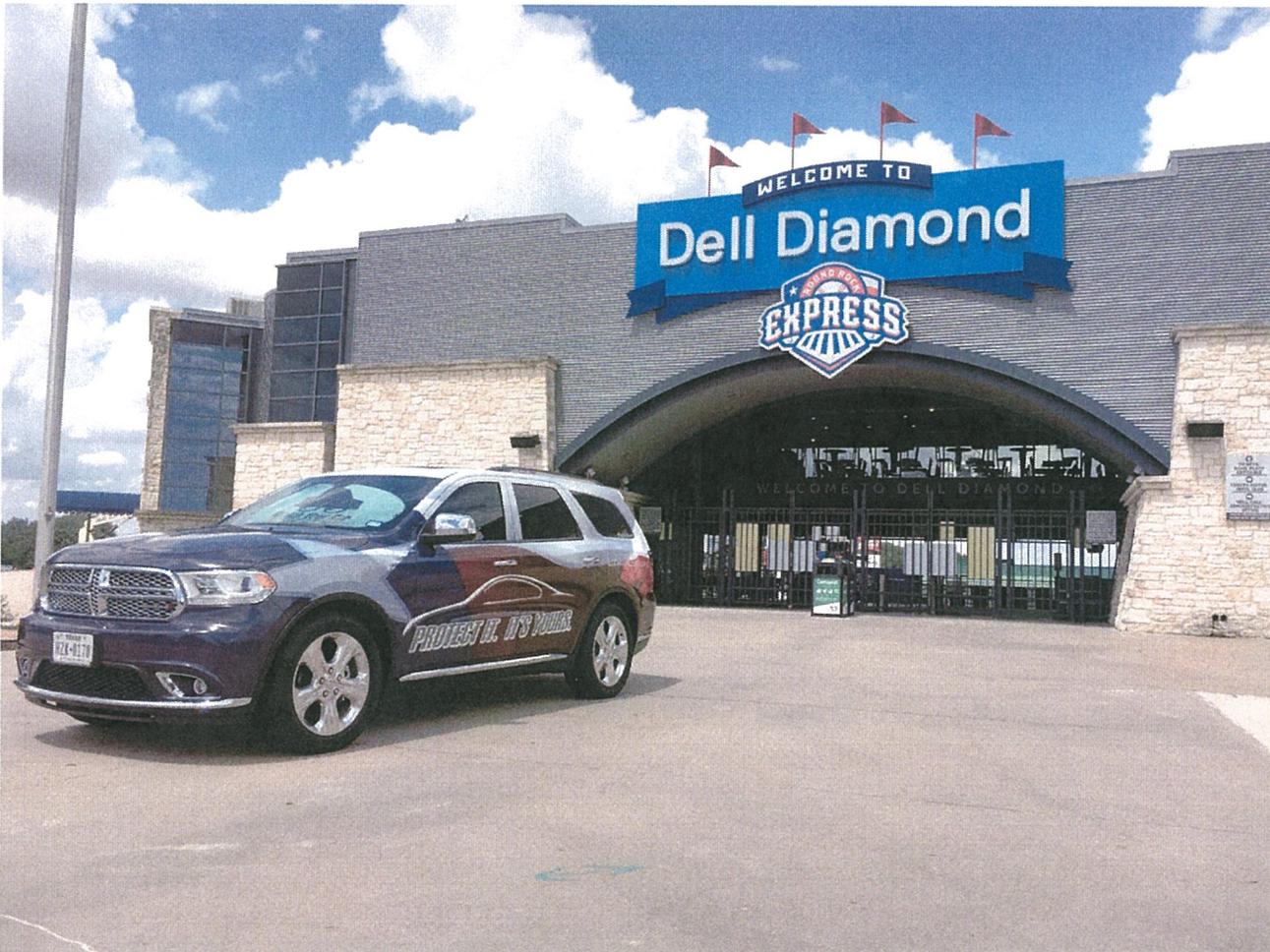
On August 03, 2017, the Travis Co Agent assisted Texas Department of Public Safety Special Agents with executing a search warrant at an automotive shop. An investigation into the location revealed several VIN swapped stolen vehicles had been sold from the business. While on scene, the Travis Co Agent was successfully able to identify several VIN donor vehicles. The Agent also seized a tow truck which had the VIN swapped on it. Investigations in this case are ongoing.

During the month of August, Travis Co Agents, along with other SCATTF Agents, utilized the newly functional Bait Vehicles in an operation in northern Travis County. This particular area has seen a high volume of auto burglary and auto theft. Within just hours of deployment on the very first night, one of the Bait Vehicles was

successfully stolen. Agents were able to retrieve the vehicle and take a suspect into custody. The arrested person has a lengthy criminal history which includes UUMV charges. In conjunction with the maiden deployment of the Bait Vehicles, Agents conducted nighttime enforcement activities utilizing plain clothes surveillance with support from marked patrol vehicles to target auto burglars and thieves. This resulted in two arrests for other offenses, as well as the recovery of a stolen vehicle.

Community Liaison:

During the month of August, the Community Liaison continued to develop working relationships with businesses and other stakeholders within the SCATTF coverage area. One particular meeting resulted in a partnership between the management of the Dell Diamond Sports Stadium in Williamson County. On August 03, 2017, this alliance came to fruition when the Public Awareness Vehicle was prominently displayed at the main entrance of the facility during a home game of the Round Rock Express, which is a Triple-A Pacific Coast Minor League baseball team. *This particular game had a confirmed attendance of 8,519, resulting in large scale exposure for SCATTF and ABTPA, successfully spreading the message of auto burglary and theft prevention. (Picture Attached).*



September 2017

Hays Co Agent:

On 09/06/2017, the Hays Co Agent received a call a San Marcos PD Detective in reference to a case they were working where they seized a vehicle from a Suspect. The Detective advised that the vehicle looked much newer than what it was registered as. The Agent arrived and observed the Public VIN and observed it had been changed. The Agent was able to slide the blade of a knife under the VIN plate and the plate immediately popped off. He observed where the VIN plate had been glued to the area where the original had been removed. The Hays Co Agent identified the vehicle by Secondary means and found it to have been stolen a month prior out of San Antonio. The vehicle was successfully recovered due to the Agent's assistance.

On 09/21/2017, the Hays Co Agent received a call from Pflugerville PD in reference to an officer being out with a motorcycle who was requesting assistance. The Agent was advised that a subject found the motorcycle on Craigslist out of San Antonio, and subsequently traded two of his own dirt bikes for the sport bike he was now in possession of. The Officer advised that the VIN looked tampered with, and sent the Agent a picture of the VIN located on the neck of the motorcycle. With guidance from the Agent, the officer was able to locate the engine number as well. Once the picture was received, the Agent observed signs of tampering. Two of the numbers had been changed up, but most of the VIN was original. After conducting a search based on what was known to be the majority of the correct VIN, it was discovered to be a stolen motorcycle out of San Antonio from 5 years prior and had been purged out of NCIC/TCIC. The officer on scene was able to make the recovery on the motorcycle due to the Agent's expertise.

October 2017

Multiple Agents/Community Liaison:

During the months of October and November, SCATTF Agents worked with multiple agencies in a Crime Reduction campaign in the Wells Branch and Pflugerville area of Travis County. Part of this initiative consisted of two weeks of constant deployment of bait vehicles and bait equipment with surveillance in the area. Agents from SCATTF, Travis County Sheriff's Office, Pflugerville Police Department, Austin Police Department and the Texas Department of Public Safety collaborated to bring this campaign to fruition. In addition, the Community Liaison worked with area apartment complexes and HOAs to distribute over 18,000 ABTPA "25-Tips" brochures through physical as well as electronic copies. Towards the conclusion of this initiative, a large VIN Etching and public safety event was conducted, where 49 persons opted to receive VIN Etching on their vehicles. Post-Initiative, multiple agencies held a 'Town Hall' public event where information was provided to approximately 150 attendees.

November 2017

Multiple Agents:

As Operation was conducted as part of an ongoing investigation involving SCATTF, Travis County Sheriff's Office, Austin Police Department, and NICB. Agents directed the stop of a MVT Offender associated with the investigation, which resulted in an arrest for license violations and failure to ID. A stolen 2016 Ram pick-up with a VIN Swap to a 2013 Ram was seized. Investigation is still ongoing but it has led to the identification of a MVT enterprise associated with Mexican organized crime involved in human smuggling, narcotics, and other crimes where stolen vehicles are used for the criminal enterprise then dismantled at various locations in Dallas, Austin,

Houston and San Antonio. At this point in the investigation over \$350,000 in stolen vehicles, parts, and assets have been seized.

Jackson Co Agent:

During the November reporting period, the Jackson Co Agent began investigating a Theft of a Trailer along with a Theft of a ATV that occurred from a residence. The Agent noted that the initial patrol officer had found a hitch on the side of the roadway which had previously been sitting on the victim's trailer. He took the initiative to canvas the area in the same direction the hitch was located, and managed to find a witness who had made contact with the suspects when they experienced mechanical issues with the suspect vehicle. The Jackson Co Agent took the description from the witness and reviewed surveillance footage from a gas station further down the roadway. He obtained footage of the suspects, which the victim was able to manage to identify her trailer and the witness was able to identify the suspects as the same persons she had previously assisted. One of the suspects was seen on camera with the logo of a business, which the Agent researched and found the company it corresponded to in Rosharon, Texas. After contacting management at that company, the suspect was fully identified and a warrant was issued. The suspect turned himself in, but at this time has ceased cooperating with the Agent.

December 2017

Travis Co Agent:

Travis Co Agent with the assistance of 6 other agents conducted a Search Warrant on 12/7/17 resulting in locating 5 stolen vehicles and recovering 13 stolen or illegal firearms.

Travis Co Agent conducted a Consent Search on 12/20/17 with 3 Task Force agents resulting in 2 recovered stolen vehicles and 2 stolen/illegal firearms.

Wharton Co Agent:

The Wharton Co Agent was contacted by the City of El Campo PD in reference to a firearm that had been stolen from a BOV which occurred in Wharton County. The weapon had been located at the scene of a shooting in El Campo. El Campo PD and the Wharton Co Agent coordinated their investigations, resulting in the identification and arrest of a 14 year old juvenile. The suspect confessed to the Burglary of Vehicle case in Wharton County, as well as the Assault with a Deadly Weapon case in El Campo, which injured a 16 year old juvenile. The suspect also named three other juveniles he had planned to shoot. Several other pieces of stolen property were located from his residence and returned to their rightful owners. The juvenile remains in custody awaiting transfer to a State of Texas facility.