

VENTURA COUNTY AUTO THEFT TASK FORCE -VENCATT-



Mission Statement

- The mission of VENCATT is to reduce the incidence of vehicle theft in Ventura County through proactive enforcement efforts, apprehension of the professional and organized vehicle thief, education, and public awareness.

Specific Objectives

- ❑ Increase arrests and recoveries
- ❑ Increase prosecution rate
- ❑ Maintain a repository of vehicle theft intelligence and disseminate to allied agencies
- ❑ Increase public awareness
- ❑ Monitor specific locations used in conjunction with auto theft activities
- ❑ Monitor repeat offenders maintain compliance through probation and parole terms
- ❑ Provide auto theft and investigations training

Current Participating Agencies

- California Highway Patrol – 3 uniformed
- VCDA Bureau of Investigations – 1 uniformed, 1 attorney, and 1 secretary
- Ventura Police Department – 1 uniformed – part time
- National Insurance Crime Bureau – 1 Agent – when available

MOU Participating Agencies

- ❑ California Highway Patrol – 3 uniformed
- ❑ VCDA – 1 uniformed, 1 attorney, 1 secretary
- ❑ Ventura PD – 1 uniformed – part time
- ❑ NICB – 1 Agent – when available
- ❑ Oxnard PD – VACANT
- ❑ Port Hueneme PD – VACANT
- ❑ Department of Motor Vehicles – VACANT
- ❑ Department of Insurance – VACANT
- ❑ VSO – Not on MOU – willing with funding
- ❑ Simi Valley PD - Not on MOU – willing with funding

As needed Federal Agency participation

- ❑ Drug Enforcement Agency
- ❑ Secret Service
- ❑ Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms
- ❑ Federal Bureau of Investigations
- ❑ Department of Justice

Long term investigations of note

- Sudden Impact: 16 months undercover operation resulting in 92 arrests, 94 stolen vehicles, 65 weapons, \$14,000 counterfeit funds and \$200,000 worth of narcotics
- A Few Good Men: 3 month operation leading to the recovery of over \$500,000 of stolen military equipment
- Devil's Advocate: 4 months chop shop and narcotics investigation in Santa Paula leading to the gang injunction of 12 suspects

Proactive Actions

- ❑ Public Service Announcements on PBS throughout the county citing education and awareness to prevent auto theft
- ❑ Free glass etching events in conjunction with AAA and NICB
- ❑ Free 3rd row seat events in conjunction with AAA and NICB
- ❑ Training and trend bulletins created and distributed to allied agencies
- ❑ Advanced Investigation 3 day training course

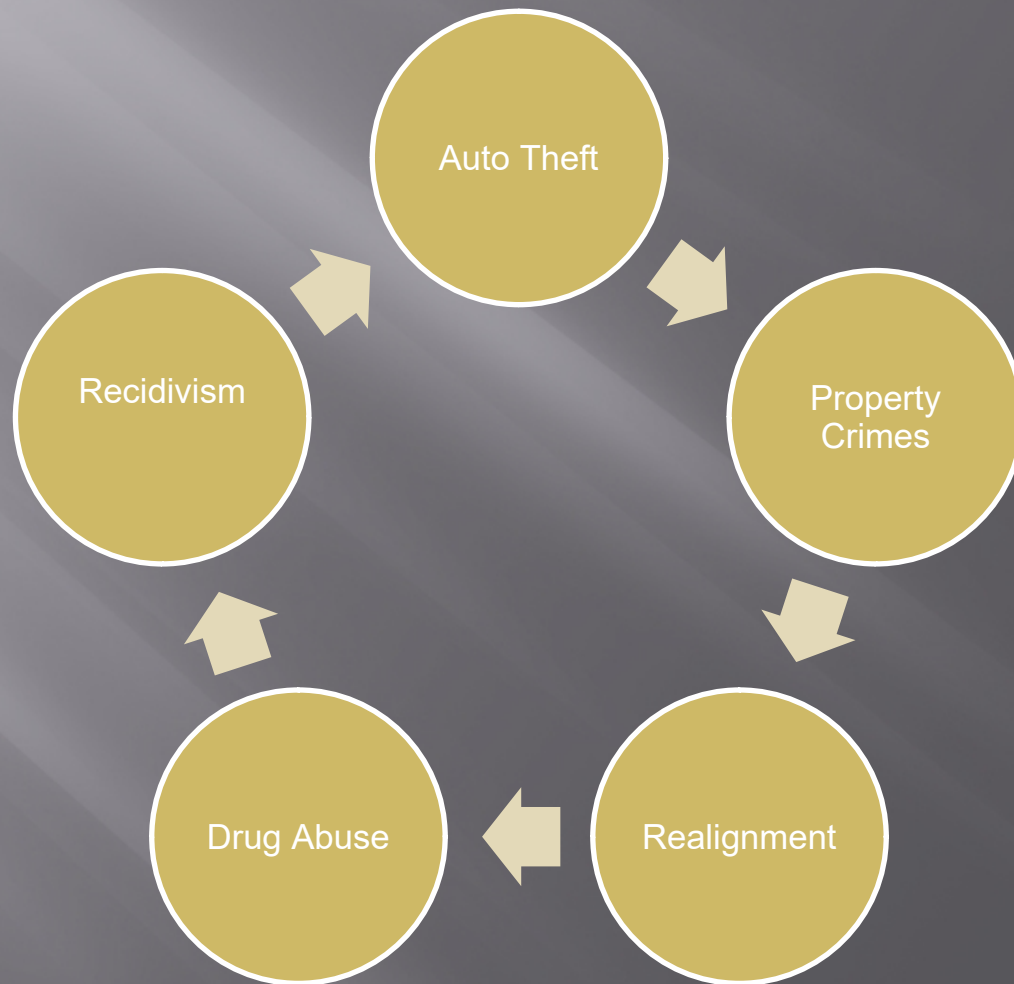
Current Cases involving fraud

- Cool Whips: Current and on going investigation which originated in Simi Valley where a suspect was determined to possess 6 stolen, VIN switched, or fraudulently purchased luxury vehicles valued over \$550,000. Search warrant resulted in the recovery of the 6 luxury cars, 5 lbs marijuana, and a gun.
- Subsequent investigation revealed 12 additional suspects conspiring in the theft of over 300 vehicles in four counties...

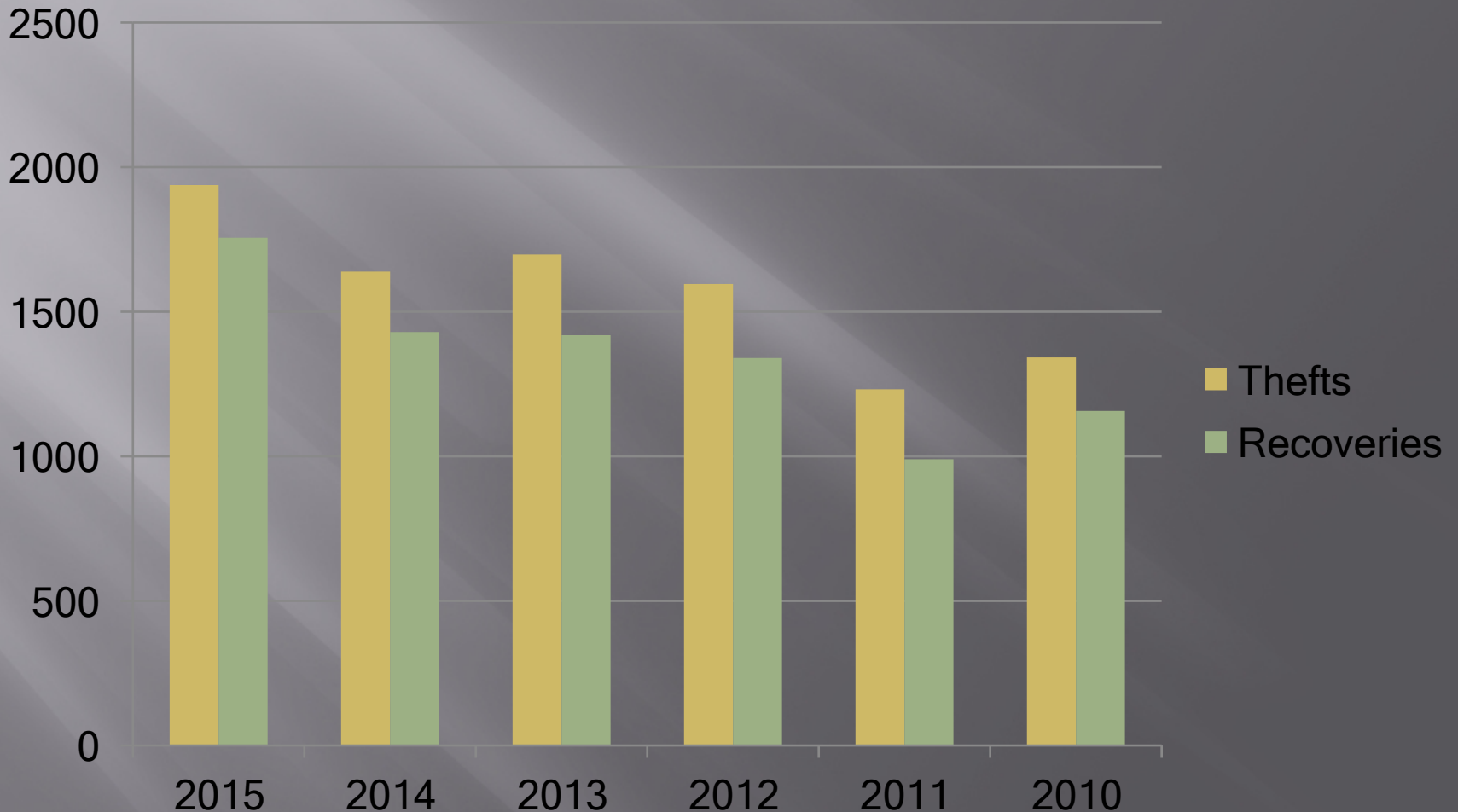
Other duties

- ❑ Instruct P.O.S.T. Auto Theft Courses statewide six time per year
- ❑ Warrant Service Team
- ❑ Officer Involved Shooting Team
- ❑ Critical Incident Investigation Team
- ❑ High profile, sensitive, or internal investigations which exceed local resources or capabilities

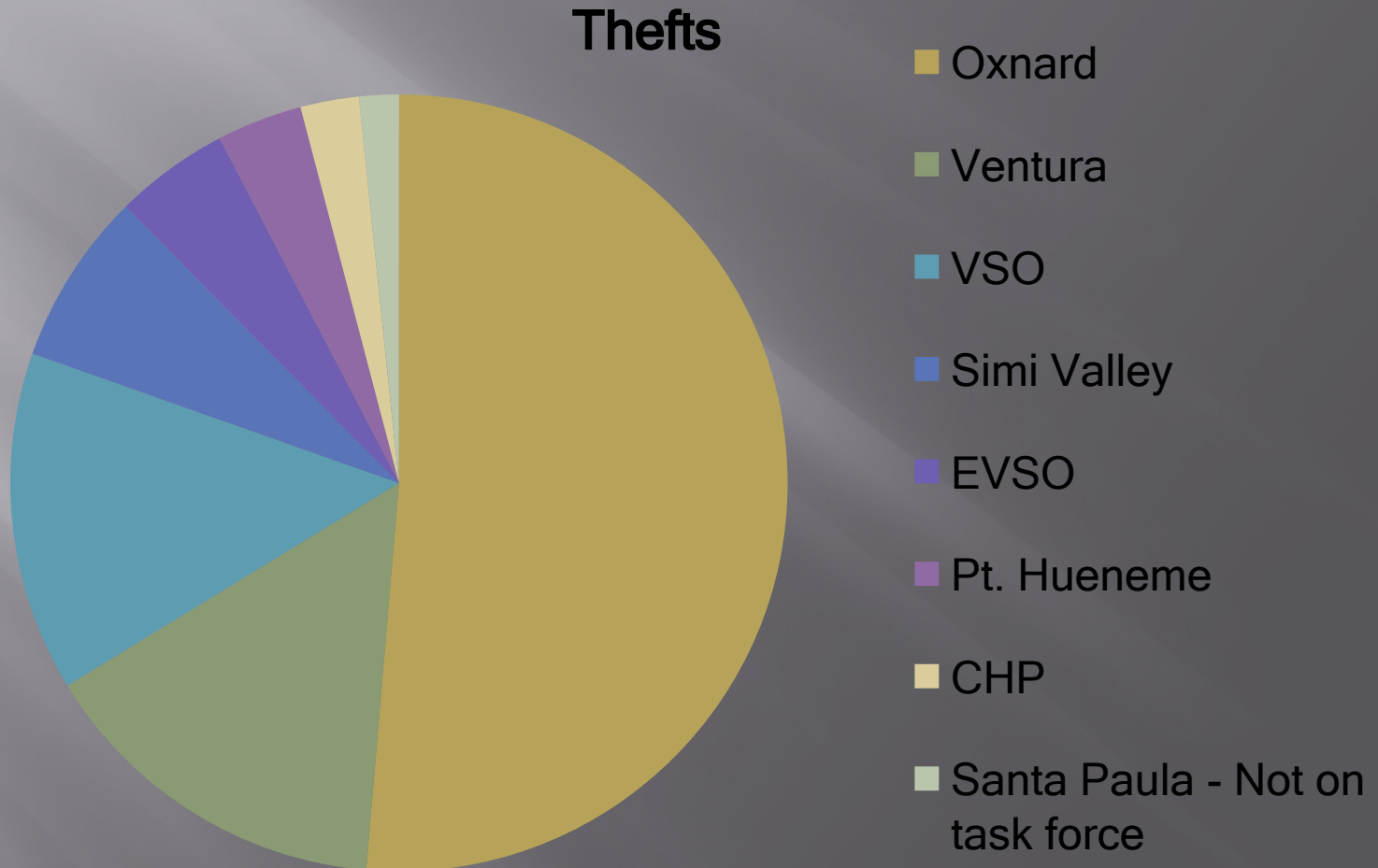
Current Issues



Ventura County Statistics

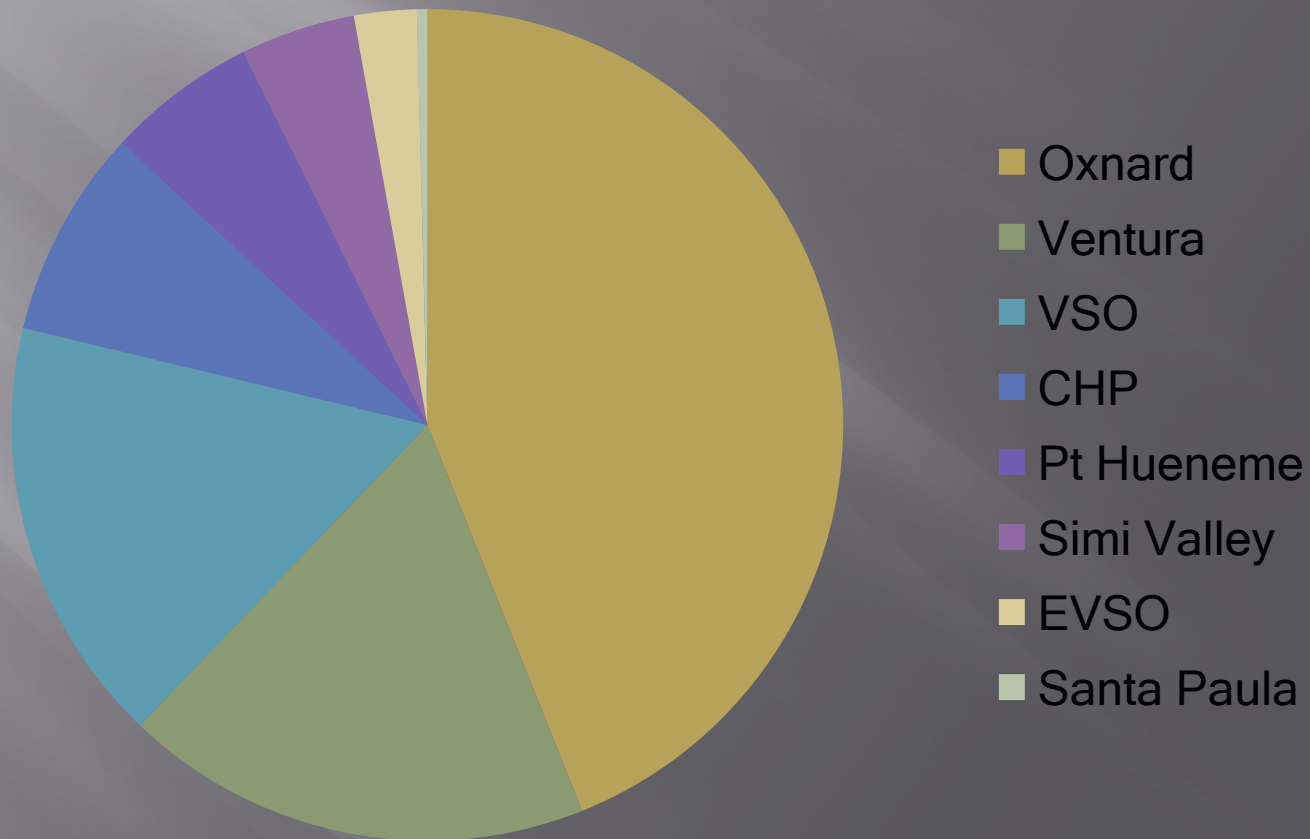


Thefts by Jurisdiction



Recoveries by Jurisdiction

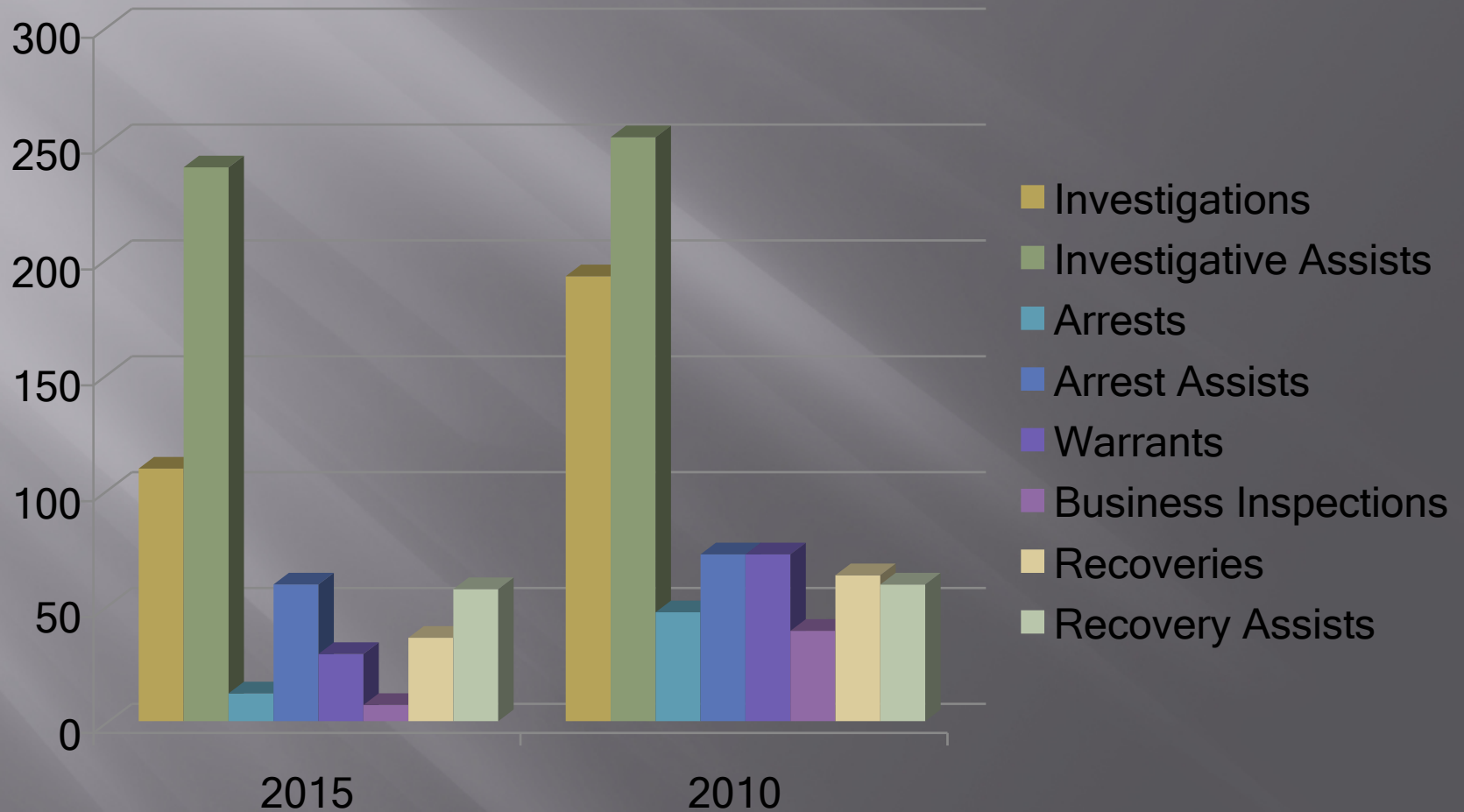
Recoveries



County wide percentages

- ❑ Oxnard has 51% of the thefts and 44% of the recoveries-they are on the MOU, but not participating due to funding.
- ❑ VSO / EVSO has 19% of the thefts and 19% of the recoveries-they are not on the MOU and will not participate without funding.
- ❑ Ventura has 15% of thefts and 18% of the recoveries-they have committed a part time detective.
- ❑ Simi Valley has 7% of the thefts and 4% of the recoveries-they are not on the MOU and do not participate due to funding.

Current staffing (4.5) vs. full staffing (10)



County Vehicle Population

- Ventura County has over 800,000 residents
- Ventura County has 789,912 registered vehicles which contribute \$1 per car and \$2 per truck to the effort to combat auto theft and DUI pursuant to 9250 CVC.
- Only a fraction of this income is utilized directly to finance members of VENCATT

Proposed resolution to issues

- 9250.14 CVC Allows participating counties to increase auto theft/DUI fees
- 9250.7 CVC Allows participating counties to extend their sunset dates for the AVA program in 10 year increments
- By increasing the automobile fee from \$1 to \$2 and the commercial fee from \$2 to \$4, the revenue could fund task force positions by paying salary and benefits to participating agencies

Funding Goal

- Through discussions with Chiefs of police and D.A. Totten, funding is the sole issue for task force participation.
- All agencies are willing to participate should the funding be made available.
- Doubling the fee would easily add 4 detectives and thereby double task force statistics and effectiveness