2013 Herman Goldstein Award

To Catch a Thief: Utilizing Bait Technology at the

Albuquerque Police Department

Project Summary

Being a victim of auto theft, newly elected Albuquerque Mayor Richard J. Berry placed property crimes high on his priority list. Lowering property crime became a part of his campaign platform.

Immediately after taking office, Mayor Berry assembled a public safety team that drafted the "Our City, Our Property, Our Plan." This is a 15-point plan designed to reduce property crime. Part of the plan included the development of NITe Detectives. The NITe Detectives are a general unit that handles all types of property crimes in support of other specialized units. Moreover, use of technology such as bait items was developed and deployed under the Property Crimes Division.

Analysis identified a number of contributing factors:

- Victims were leaving valuables in plain view and car doors were left unlocked.

- Offenders were committing the same crime multiple times without penalty.

A technologically driven, proactive approach to this problem was necessary.

The project responded to each leg of the Problem Analysis Triangle (Crime Triangle):

- Target hardening through education via Public Service Announcements, media campaigns, and vehicle wraps.

- Targeting repeat offenders through the use of bait technology.

- Using predictive hotspot mapping to place resources in areas identified as likely targets for auto burglaries.

During the 2012 project there were:

- 123 arrests for the theft of baited items.

- 323 auto burglary arrests citywide, an increase of 22% from 2011.

- A decrease of 1% in auto burglaries from 2011 to 2012.

- Best practices developed for combating auto burglary crime in Albuquerque.

- Establishment of a funded program for bait car and bait item within the Property Crimes Division at the Albuquerque Police Department.

Project Description

A.   Scanning

Historically, Albuquerque ranks in the top 20 cities for property crime rates. Mayor Richard J. Berry promised the citizens of Albuquerque that he would develop a plan to reduce property crimes in Albuquerque starting with auto burglaries. Consistently, auto burglaries have led property crime rates in Albuquerque for decades. The project plan "Our City, Our Property, Our Plan" went into effect January 24, 2010.

One year after Mayor Berry took office in December of 2009, auto burglary decreased by 18% citywide. However, the success was short-lived with a 6% increase from 2010 to 2011.

Auto Burglary has always been a top priority discussed at neighborhood association meetings. Unfortunately, the approach to auto burglary through Impact Teams had been a reactive measure and did not positively effect the desired outcome of reduction. In 2011, an average of 21 auto burglaries occurred daily in Albuquerque. Citizens concern about the increase in auto burglary after there had been a significant decrease not one year prior led the Albuquerque Police Department to look into technology to support smart policing for auto burglary crime reduction.

Traditionally, the Albuquerque Police Department (APD) assigned auto burglary cases to the six area command impact teams.

B.   Analysis

The fact that offenders commit multiple crime types was important for Detectives of specialized units to understand and make the connection. This was achieved through discussions between crime analysis and different specialized units at APD. These discussions facilitated the sharing of knowledge that offenders involved in Auto Theft were also committing Auto Burglary. It appeared that a nexus existed between crimes that Property Crimes Division detectives investigated and what detectives in Impact Teams investigated.

In order to adjust for the lack of manpower in the impact teams, the Property Crimes Division was chosen to develop and implement new technology to reduce auto burglary.

Victims

Due to a lack of education or the thought that the crime "will not happen to me", victims leave their property in open sight in their automobile. Cell phones, purses, and laptops are typical items that are stolen from vehicles on a daily basis. Leaving valuables in the vehicle can increase the likelihood of becoming a victim.

Albuquerque Field Investigators generate reports for many of the property crime calls. These reports indicate the type of entry made by the offender. Many of the Field Investigation reports indicate that there were "No Signs of Forced Entry" used to gain access and burglarize the items in the vehicle. This suggests that victims not only leave items in the vehicle, but also do not take preventative measures like locking their doors or

rolling up the windows. For 2009 – 2011, auto burglary field investigation reports showed that 20% were identified with "No Signs of Forced Entry". These field investigation reports account for 31% of the overall auto burglary reports for this timeframe. Based on the three years sample size, it is estimated that at least 65% of the auto burglaries would indicate "No Signs of Forced Entry".

Offenders

2009 – 2011 auto burglary offenders who were arrested are typically males with an average age of 26 years old.

Auto burglary is an attractive property crime because it can be easy and quick to commit, especially when crime prevention measures are not taken by the general public. The items stolen can be pawned at any of the 18 pawn shops in Albuquerque. In addition, 23 metal recycling businesses exist and the Gold and Silver Exchanges continue to increase throughout the City. Stolen items are also used to bargain with drug-dealers.

When it comes to analyzing the offenders' profiles, it is often noted that the offenders have been caught committing a similar crime before, classifying them as a repeat offender. For example, Anthony Chavez is a twenty-two year old male that has approximately 11 arrests since 2008. Anthony's charges include auto burglary, commercial burglary and auto theft. When the bait project launched Anthony's involvement was seen again. Another individual who was listed as a repeat offender and then seen again after the bait project launched is Eric Duenas. Eric is a thirty-six year old male who has been arrested approximately seven times since 1996. Eric's charges include criminal damage, possession of a controlled substance, aggravated assault of a household member, DWI, auto burglary, and pick pocketing.

Other effects of Auto burglary

Auto burglary calls take time away from other calls for service. It is estimated that each auto burglary call is $1/8^{th}$ of an officer's time during their shift.

Increase in automobile insurance rates is another effect that auto burglary has upon the community. Location is a factor that insurance companies consider when calculating an auto insurance rate. High incidence of auto burglary can become an issue for carrying auto insurance.

Location

Auto burglaries most often occur in areas that have high concentrations of vehicles such as parking lots. Vehicles in neighborhoods are also targeted, especially in high crime neighborhoods. Due to small garages or remodels to homes that converted the garage to a living space, many residents park their vehicle on the street or driveway. The ability to have easy access to vehicles makes certain neighborhoods attractive to auto burglary offenders. Overall, these areas typically have a high crime rate. A pattern to be noted is that offenders will often saturate an area resulting in a high amount of theft, and then move to a different area. Typically, the offenders will return to the area again at a later date.

Much of the identification of where to place resources relied upon officer knowledge of high crime areas. Impact Teams were good sources of information for locations; however, they were often busy following leads for the auto burglary cases.

Auto burglary density maps and predictive maps (Figure 1) would be used to assist in identifying locations for potential auto burglary arrests. This type of information was

only useful if used immediately and not with a time lag due to offenders often moving to another neighborhood.

In addition, upper management and officer requests would be considered. Commanders attend four to eight neighborhood meetings per month within their particular area command. At these meetings, auto burglary is consistently a topic that is discussed.

Times

Theft within neighborhoods is typically seen between 2200 and 0400 hours. Offenders go through neighborhoods checking for unlocked car doors or rolled-down car windows. Auto burglaries in parking lots are typically reported throughout the day as persons return to their car after finishing their errand.

Internal Resources

Before the use of bait item technology, auto burglary was being addressed in the following conventional manner:

Action	Description	Pros	Cons
Stake-outs	Look to high-crime areas and officers will wait in area to catch the criminals.	Offenders could be caught. Presence of law enforcement.	Time-consuming use of manpower.
AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System)	Identifying and linking offender fingerprints from a crime scene.	Hard evidence for case support.	Time-consuming on the part of the CrimeLab due to limited staff. Not always able to obtain fingerprints or link to offender.
Crime Stoppers	Anonymous tips call center.	Provides potential leads when there is a lack of evidence concerning an offender to crime.	Callers are not always a viable source of information. Dependent on citizen to call.

			Reactive and not proactive.
Private Surveillance Footage	Public-private partnership with law enforcement using video technology.	Image of offender to use for evidence.	Limited resource and only available from those with the technology. Time needed to review the video. Resolution of video is not always useful in offender identification.

External Sources

APD reviewed other Southwestern Departments equivalent in size to learn what actions

and tools they used to proactively combat auto burglary. The Dallas Police Department

began using technology like GPS tracked bait cars and bait property in 2010. They have

seen good success by using the technology and effecting auto burglary in the Dallas

Metro area.

C.   Response

Based upon our findings, the Albuquerque Police Department determined that proactive

measures were a necessity. In order to take proactive measures without significant use of

manpower and time, technology became a viable option for combating property crime

like auto burglary. The implementation included technologies of ETS bait cars and bait

items, as well as public education.

The following responses were initiated in 2012:

ETS Bait Cars and Bait Items

The Albuquerque Police Department spent a significant amount of money purchasing bait

cars, and the technology associated with bait cars. This technology includes the ability to

monitor the bait cars remotely and log into live camera feeds for real-time video

monitoring. Approximately half of the vehicles used for the auto burglary bait program were donated by the National Insurance Crime Bureau and member companies. The other half of the fleet was purchased by the Department. The Albuquerque Police Department purchased the GPS/Radio Frequency tracking beacons from a private company and within six months became the biggest user of the technology. The bait car and bait item program grew so large, that it became the NITe Detective Team's sole responsibility.

Based on predictive crime mapping the auto burglary bait vehicles are left in strategic locations to attract offenders real-time.   Property items such as laptops and purses are left in the vehicle with tracking systems hidden within the item. Video cameras are also located in the vehicle to capture the crime as it occurs. Detectives are notified via text message or email when the item or vehicle is moved. Officers do not have to manually monitor the location. The automation process saves on resources like manpower and time, as well as assists in increasing the number of arrests.

Public Education through Media

The Property Crime Division recognized the importance of communicating the efforts of reducing auto burglary to the citizens. After all, the citizens had raised the issue of auto burglary and auto theft initially at neighborhood association meetings. Maintaining strong relationships with the stakeholder groups is important throughout the new property crimes procedure. It provides trust and confidence to the community that law enforcement listened to their concerns and is working at addressing the issue. For law enforcement, it is an opportunity to educate the public on how to reduce chances of

victimization. Smarter citizens that are proactive and aware of keeping their belongings safe give less opportunity to offenders to commit crimes.

Multiple sources of media were utilized to consistently get the message out that bait cars and bait items were being used by the Property Crimes Division. This was done through newspaper articles and press releases (Figure 2). On a weekly basis, a bait car video depicting a serial auto burglar would be released to the media. Local television reporters would run a two to three minute story showing actual video surveillance of the serial offender (Figure 3).

Mobile electronic signage was used and placed in select areas of the city to warn the public and offenders that bait car and bait items were placed throughout the area (Figure 4).

 The Hartford Insurance Company donated a truck for the purpose of public education. Working with a local business the Albuquerque Police Department designed and wrapped the truck with anti-theft slogans. This vehicle is taken to special events and placed in highly visible locations to warn and educate the public (Figure 5).

Nearly a third of auto burglaries occurred without using force. A car window was left open or a car door was left unlocked. The Albuquerque Police Department utilized Public Service Announcements on local TV stations to push the "Hide, Lock, Take" program. This program encourages citizens to be mindful by taking their keys with them, locking their doors and hiding their valuables.

The Albuquerque Police Department also designed and distributed an anti-theft handout that was placed in water bills reaching over one hundred thousand city residents.

Intent of Response

Through the implementation of the ETS Bait Car system, it was expected that auto burglary rates would be reduced. The attention given to the issue and communicated to the community through media and public education of the technology implemented would make all aware. Utilizing the technology reduces the amount of surveillance hours for personnel. Therefore, this assists in judicious use of personnel and over-time use by detectives which saves on man hours and efficiencies of work product. This helps to save the City money.

The response of APD was also to reduce auto burglary rates by making offenders become fearful of burglarizing vehicles because the owner items could be law enforcement. In addition, APD worked with judicial systems to have appropriate bonds set for repeat offenders.

Resources Available

- City of Albuquerque general funds for the initial purchase of technology.

- Donated vehicles and equipment from the National Insurance Crime Bureau and its member companies.

- Donated bait property from the Albuquerque Retail Assets Protection Association (ARAPA) public-private partnership with Albuquerque Police Department.

- Donated construction equipment from the Construction Industry Crime Alliance (CICA) public-private partnership with Albuquerque Police Department.

- Local businesses such as Discount Tire Company donated sets of rims and tires to combat metal theft.

- Victims of theft donated property like air conditioners to assist in the apprehension of repeat offenders.

Difficulties Encountered

Crime Mapping is performed by the Crime Analysis Unit at the Albuquerque Police Department. There are two crime analysts to assist the entire Department. For the bait cars and bait items to be placed in an area with a high likelihood of auto burglary crime committed, the density and predictive maps needed to be developed and utilized within a day. Due to limited staff and time spent developing the maps and analysis, the maps were not always useful to assist with bait car and bait item deployment.

The auto burglary bait program was such a huge success that it inadvertently created a strain on the staffing and financial resources of the department. Based on predictive mapping hotspots for auto burglary, the department realized the need for a large fleet of cars to increase the odds of identifying and capturing repeat offenders. The fleet nearly doubled in the course of six months to keep up with the demand; however, it needed an additional six to eight cars to complete the fleet and catch up with its successes.

The NITe Detective team lost several members due to transfers which included the Sergeant. During the first six months of the program/project, the team operated with a skeleton crew that caused staff to be exhausted and overworked.

This project addressed repeat offenders rather than the occasional opportunist thief. One of the problems encountered was several repeat offenders were found incompetent through the court systems and were released only to re-offend.

Who was involved in response to the problem.

The Mayor's office fully supported the bait item project with resources throughout the 2012 year long implementation phase. The support included funding for the technology as well as media releases and news conferences.

The auto burglary problem was so wide spread and far reaching that community involvement included individuals, businesses, and public-private partnerships. Albuquerque Retail Assets Protection Association (ARAPA) and Construction Industry Crime Alliance (CICA) were amongst those partnerships. Several individual members of the community donated property to help the bait program. Large and small businesses also donated everything from copper tubing and wire to rims and tires.

Albuquerque Police Department specialized units worked towards the goal of reducing auto burglary. Property Crimes Division units of NITe Detectives and Auto Theft worked towards the development and implementation of bait cars and bait items. These units determined place-based locations best suited for mimicking cars with items that auto burglars offend. Crime Analysis developed density and predictive hotspot maps with additional information such as time of day and day of week to assist detectives to work with their resources in an efficient and effective manner.

The Dallas Police Department worked closely with the Albuquerque Police Department during the planning and implementation stage which helped avoid common mistakes.

D.   Assessment

During the 2012 calendar year, the auto burglary bait project affected 123 arrests directly

related to the theft of GPS tracked bait items. Compared to our mentor city, the Dallas

metro area, APD affected twice as many arrests. In 2012, the auto burglary bait project

became a program that is continuously used to this day.

Results

Overall, Albuquerque saw a decrease in auto burglary in 2010 with an increase in 2011.

The implementation of the bait car and bait item project in 2012 realized a decrease once

more in auto burglary. While property crimes decreased in 2012 for auto theft and auto

burglary, there was an increase in residential burglary and commercial burglary. The shift

in attention and utilization of bait car / bait item technology may have caused criminals to

attempt other property crimes like residential burglary. Criminal activity displacement

might suggest why residential and commercial burglary increased in 2012. It may also

suggest why auto burglary and auto theft decreased that year.

	Percentage Change		
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Auto Burglary	-19%	9%	-1%
Auto Theft	-20%	-3%	-4.5%
Commercial Burglary	-4%	-1%	21.5%
Residential Burglary	-18%	9%	7%

Another benefit of the bait car and bait item project was that auto burglary arrests

increased consistently from 2010 to 2012 (Figure 5). A 63% increase in auto burglary

arrests occurred.

Repeat Offenders Identified

The project highlighted the fact that a small majority of offenders commit a large majority of the crimes. This is also known as the Pareto Principle, which is the theory that 80% of the crimes are performed by 20% of the population. One of the repeat offenders, Anthony Chavez, burglarized a bait car on one side of Albuquerque and a few months later broke into another bait car across town. Another repeat offender, Eric Duenas, was arrested for stealing baited precious metals. He was on probation at the time of this arrest. Months later he was arrested again for stealing bait items a second time.

Recognizing that repeat offenders exist for auto burglary and other types of property crimes, a full-time officer was assigned from APD to assist in setting bonds for arraignments. In addition, the officer would identify and track those repeat offenders incompetent to stand trial.

Psychological Effects on Offenders

Bait vehicle surveillance footage demonstrates that the program helped educate the offenders as well. Many of the bait car videos capture offenders stating they hope the vehicle is not a bait car. The bait program has helped offenders second guess themselves and their actions. This can be seen as a proactive measure.

Displacement

While the City of Albuquerque has reduced auto burglary, the success led to displacement of auto burglary to surrounding jurisdictions like Rio Rancho, Los Lunas, and Santa Fe. Rio Rancho had been ranked among the top 100 Best Places to live by Money magazine for low crime rates. However, in 2012 during APD's full implementation and use of bait car and bait item for auto burglary, Rio Rancho property crime burglaries increased 17%. Albuquerque witnessed a slight increase of 3% that year.

It is possible that the offenders committed their crimes in outside jurisdictions to avoid the possibility of being arrested due to bait technology.

Outside Agency Issues

As a result of the bait program, issues outside of property crimes have been identified. Low bonds, incompetence issues, judicial-legal issues and over crowding of jails are an issue. Other programs are being introduced in an attempt to work with these issues.

Expansion of Program

Due to the positive outcome in bait technology, the program continues to advance in technology and staffing. The NITe team has increased from five detectives to eight. Live feed cameras and equipment have been installed in many of the bait vehicles. The bait program is an innovative way to bring proactive measures to law enforcement agencies without taking away manpower and time from the field.

Other crimes solved

One of the arrests led to the cultivation of an informant. The informant gave information which led to a cold case homicide being solved. This would not have been solved had the auto burglary arrest not been made.

Best Practices Established

In 2012, the bait car and bait item began as a project to address auto burglary throughout the City, the knowledge and efforts made throughout the project helped to move it to be considered a program and best practices for Albuquerque Police Department.

Overall, the bait program has had positive feedback. There has been a statistical difference as well as positive comments from the public. The Albuquerque Police Department has received donations from victims of property crime and local businesses

as an ongoing effort to control property crimes. Some difficulties such as technology issues, staffing levels and creating time for training had to be overcome. The project is classified as a success. Victims, offenders and law enforcement agencies have been educated. The bait car / bait item technology implementation has helped reduce the fear of crime. The Albuquerque Police Department has also been contacted by other jurisdictions to apply similar technology and techniques to their own departments.

Appendix

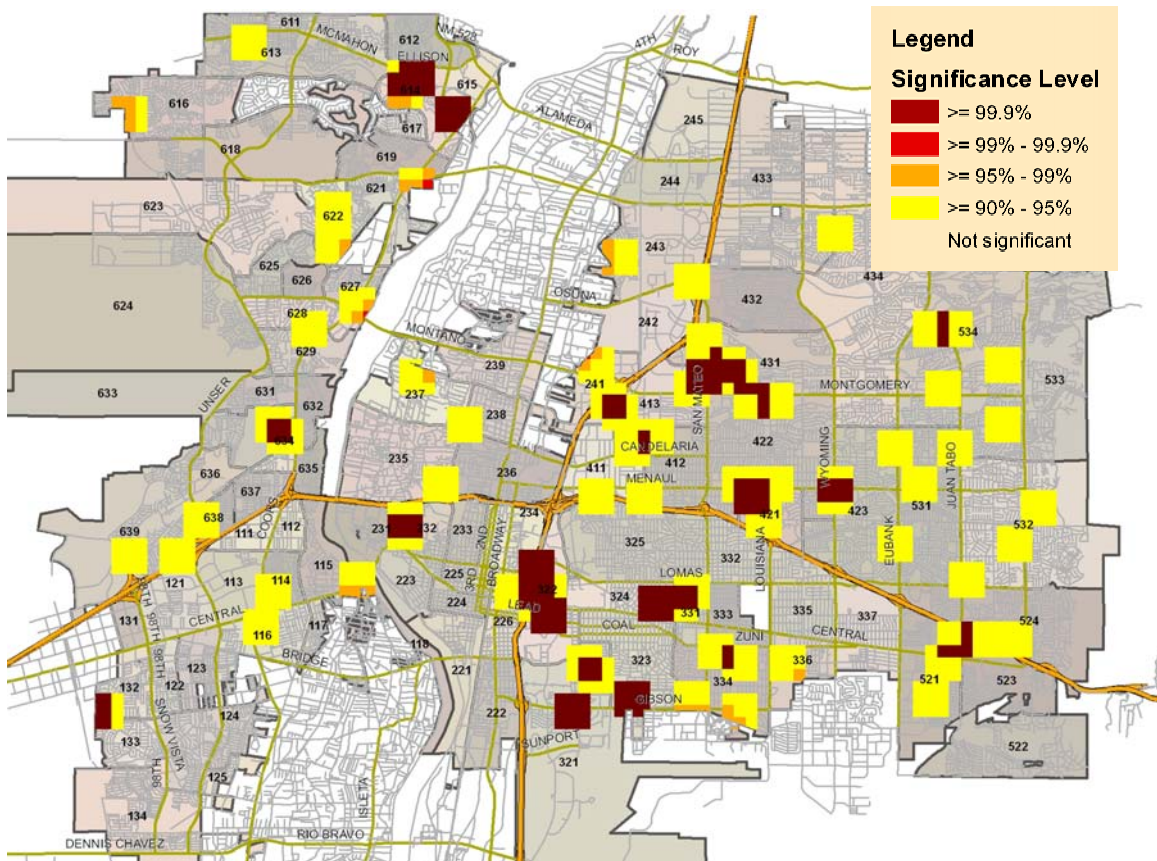Figure 1: Albuquerque Auto Burglary Predictive Hotspots.

Figure 2: Bait Car Newspaper Article.

Man steals bait car twice, makes history

Updated: Friday, 22 Jun 2012, 6:18 PM MDT
Published : Friday, 22 Jun 2012, 6:16 PM MDT

Amanda Goodman

ALBUQUERQUE (KRQE) - Albuquerque Police say Anthony Chavez has done something no criminal before him has been able to do.

At just 21-years-old Chavez has racked up a number of charges and according to online court records he's got a thing for breaking into cars.

"This is what they do they go out and this is their work, they essentially go out and victimize other people," said APD Property Crimes Sergeant J.J. Griego.

Officers say Chavez like many other property crime offenders has made a career out of stealing but that in at least one area Chavez has blazed a trail.

"This is the first time I've ever seen the same individual caught on two different bait car videos here in town," Sgt. Griego said.

APD said Chavez first broke into a bait car earlier this month in the Southeast area of the city.

Then a couple of weeks later officers say Chavez broke into a different bait car in the Southwest part of the city, that time he drove off, but was caught a short while later.

"If he were to manage to find two bait cars in the whole city of Albuquerque, there's no telling what he did in the between those two cars and what he did prior to those," said Griego.

As of Friday afternoon Chavez was still behind bars but Sergeant Griego said it is only a matter of time until he bonds out and gets back to 'work' so they are hoping the old adage of locking your car doors and taking out any valuables does not fall on deaf ears.

"We want to make sure that people are doing these things to prevent themselves from becoming a victim from people like Mr. Chavez," Sgt. Griego said.

APD said a lot of times criminals like Chavez get low bonds because they are not accused of a violent crime, which allows them to get back on the streets quickly and back to their old habits.

Figure 3: Bait Property Media News.

Police arrest three men using bait items

By ABQnews Staff on Sun, Sep 30, 2012

POSTED: 9:25 pm

Albuquerque police arrested three men who allegedly stole bait property owned by the city during separate incidents.

Gerardo Gamboa, 24, was arrested Friday after police say he took a laptop computer outfitted with an electronic monitoring system from a city-owned vehicle. He was charged with auto burglary, according to a criminal complaint filed in Metropolitan Court.

Pete Chavez, 41, was arrested Saturday after allegedly taking a city-owned vehicle along with property inside, according to a separate criminal complaint. He is charged with unlawful taking of a motor vehicle, tampering with evidence and larceny.

Glenn B. Sena was arrested Saturday for taking city-owned bait property from the bed of a truck parking on the north side of Interstate 40, according to a criminal complaint. The complaint does not identify the bait item. He was charged with larceny over $500.
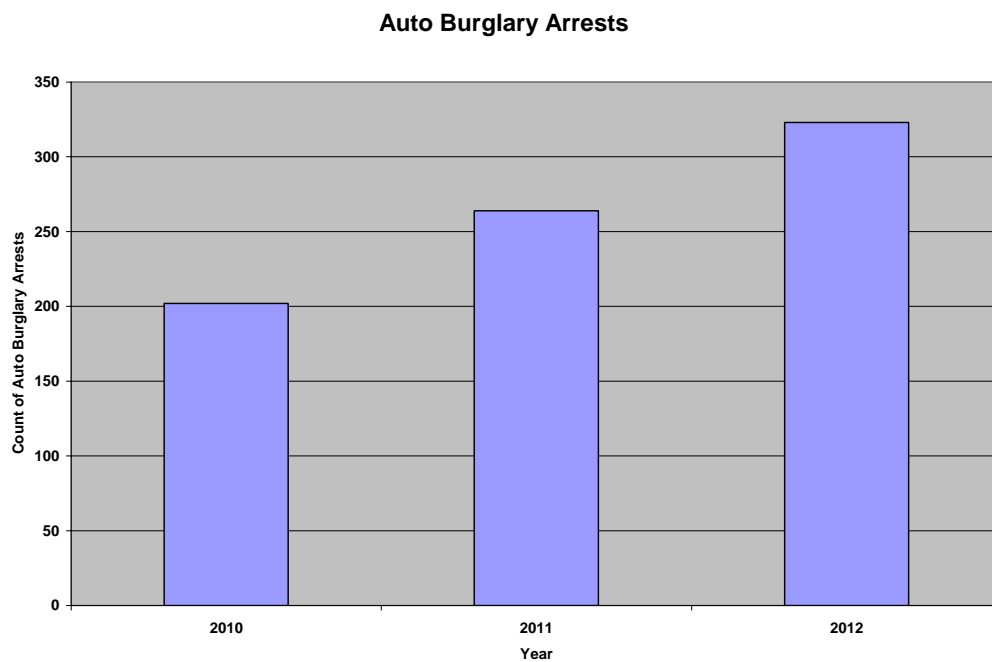
Figure 4: Mobile Electronic Signage.

Figure 5: Bait Car Wrapped Vehicle.

Figure 6: Auto Burglary Arrests from 2010 to 2012.

Auto Burglary Arrests

Agency and Officer Information

Authors:

Lt. Scott Lopez, Valley Area Command, Field Services

Sarah Masek, Crime Analyst, Real Time Crime Center

Melisa Schultz, Police Service Aid, Property Crimes Division

Key Project Members:

Cmdr. William Roseman, Internal Affairs

Lt. Scott Lopez, Valley Area Command, Field Services

Sgt. Art Gamboa, NITe Detectives, Property Crimes Division

Sgt. Jon J. Griego, Burglary, Property Crimes Division

Sgt. George Vega, Auto Theft, Property Crimes Division

Detective Rob Lujan, NITe Detectives, Property Crimes Division

Detective Jimmy Bledsoe, NITe Detectives, Property Crimes Division

Detective Aaron Jones, NITe Detectives, Property Crimes Division

Detective Miles Anderson, NITe Detectives, Property Crimes Division

Detective Chris Maes, NITe Detectives, Property Crimes Division

Detective Koury Church, NITe Detectives, Property Crimes Division

Detective Phetamphone Pholphiboun, NITe Detectives, Property Crimes Division

Detective David Taylor, NITe Detectives, Property Crimes Division

Detective Justin Montgomery, NITe Detectives, Property Crimes Division

Detective Ken Miller, Auto Theft, Property Crimes Division

Project Contact Person:

Name: Sarah Masek

Position: Crime Analyst, Real Time Crime Center

Address: 400 Roma Ave. NW

                Albuquerque, NM 87102

Phone: (505) 768-4822

Email: smasek@cabq.gov