

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

MOTOR VEHICLE CRIME PREVENTION AUTHORITY

SENATE BILL 224 ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Embassy Suites Hotel
1001 E. McCarthy Land
San Marcos, Texas 78666

9:00 a.m.
Tuesday,
July 2, 2024

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Sharon Jones, Chair
Robert Carson
Laird Doran
F. Todd Foreman
Dana Hitzman
Ricardo Porras
Stewart Prentice
Jaime Rodriguez
Sheri Steigelman
Tchad Taormina
JR Willis

STAFF:

William Diggs, MVCPA Director
David Richards, MVCPA General Counsel

ON THE RECORD REPORTING
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P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 MS. JONES: Good morning. My name is Sharon
3 Jones, and I'm pleased to open the third meeting of the
4 Senate Bill 224 Advisory Committee meeting of the Board of
5 the Motor Vehicle Crime Prevention Authority, also
6 referred to as MVCPA.

7 It is 9:00 a.m., and I am now calling the
8 advisory committee meeting for July 2, 2024, to order. I
9 want to note for the record that the public notice of this
10 meeting, containing all items on the agenda, was filed
11 with the Secretary of State on June 24, 2024.

12 Before we begin today's meeting, please place
13 all cell phones and other communication devices on silent
14 mode. And please, as a courtesy to others, do not carry
15 on side conversations or other activities in the meeting
16 room.

17 I want to welcome those who are with us for
18 today's advisory committee meeting.

19 If you wish to address the committee or speak
20 on an agenda item during today's meeting, please complete
21 a speaker's sheet at the registration table. Please
22 identify the specific item you're interested in commenting
23 on, your name and address, and whether you are
24 representing anyone or representing yourself. If your
25 comment does not pertain to a specific agenda item, we

1 will take your comment during the general public comment
2 of this meeting.

3 In accordance with the department's
4 administrative rule, comments to the advisory committee
5 will be limited to three minutes. To assist each speaker,
6 a staff member will keep time. When addressing the
7 advisory committee, please state your name and affiliation
8 for the record.

9 There are few things that will assist in making
10 the meeting run smoother and assist the MVCPA in securing
11 an accurate record: please identify yourself before
12 speaking; speak clearly and slowly; do not speak over
13 others; and please ask the chair for permission to speak
14 and be sure to get recognized before speaking.

15 Before we begin today, I'd like to remind all
16 presenters and those in attendance of the rules of conduct
17 at our advisory committee meeting. The advisory committee
18 chair has the authority to supervise the conduct of
19 meetings. This includes the authority to determine when a
20 speaker is being disruptive of the meeting or is otherwise
21 violating the timing and presentation rules I just
22 discussed.

23 I now move on to agenda item number 1 which is
24 roll call and the establishment of a quorum. Members, as
25 I call your name, please indicate whether you're present.

1 Member Carson?
2 MR. CARSON: Present.
3 MS. JONES: Member Doran?
4 MR. DORAN: Present.
5 MS. JONES: Member Foreman?
6 MR. FOREMAN: Present.
7 MS. JONES: Member Hitzman?
8 MS. HITZMAN: Present.
9 MS. JONES: Member Porras?
10 MR. PORRAS: Present.
11 MS. JONES: Member Prentice?
12 MR. PRENTICE: Present.
13 MS. JONES: Member Rodriguez?
14 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Present.
15 MS. JONES: Member Steigelman?
16 MS. STEIGELMAN: Present.
17 MS. JONES: Mr. Taormina?
18 MR. TAORMINA: Present.
19 MS. JONES: Member Willis?
20 MR. WILLIS: Present.
21 MS. JONES: Let the record reflect that I,
22 Sharon Jones, am present too. We have a quorum.
23 Members, please stand for the Pledge of
24 Allegiance.
25 (The U.S. Pledge and the Texas Pledge were

1 recited.)

2 MS. JONES: Once again, it's a great morning,
3 great morning to be here, definitely addressing the needs
4 of Texas with the Senate Bill 224 Committee. I'd like to
5 welcome everyone today. Our work is crucial in ensuring
6 that our impact on our communities and the citizens and
7 those who visit -- that's our role, to make sure that we
8 impact them but in a positive way.

9 Today we're going to continue our great
10 collaborative efforts and recommend best practices for all
11 citizens. And as usual, open dialogue is definitely a
12 must. We'll have that as usual.

13 Thank you for being here. And we will now move
14 on to agenda item number 3, and then I'll ask all members
15 to introduce themselves.

16 Member Carson, please introduce yourself and
17 tell us what you do and who you are.

18 MR. CARSON: Good morning, Chair. Thank you.

19 I'd like to thank Chair Jones and Mr. Diggs for
20 allowing me to be on this committee. I'm a sergeant with
21 the Houston Police Department. I supervise the metal
22 theft unit.

23 So I have investigators and detectives that
24 work with the scrap yards, MREs, as the supply chain.
25 That's the beginning of where these catalytic converters

1 end up and they work their way up to being processed.

2 So thank you again.

3 MS. JONES: Yes, sir.

4 Member Doran.

5 MR. DORAN: Good morning, Chair Jones, Director
6 Diggs, my fellow directors. My name is Laird Doran. I'm
7 vice president of government relations for the Friedkin
8 Group. Among the companies that we have is Gulf States
9 Toyota which is the Toyota distributor here in Texas.

10 It's an honor to be with everybody today. At
11 the legislature we have been involved from an automotive
12 and motor vehicle industry standpoint with stakeholders on
13 both SB 224 as well as a piece of legislation that was
14 passed back in 2021, the first piece of legislation
15 dealing with catalytic converter theft. So we certainly
16 recognize the seriousness of the crime and the need to
17 address it.

18 So thank you.

19 MS. JONES: Thank you, sir.

20 Member Foreman.

21 MR. FOREMAN: Good morning, and thank you for
22 allowing me to be part of this group.

23 I am Todd Foreman. I'm a retired chief of
24 police from Virginia. I now work for REMA -- the Recycled
25 Materials Association has changed its name to REMA

1 recently. I am the director of law enforcement outreach.

2

3 We are an association with about 1,700 members,
4 and many in Texas, which two of them are also on this
5 committee. So I work with them trying to build
6 relationships between law enforcement and between the
7 recycling association, and then we work to help the proper
8 legislation to help stop the theft of metals.

9 MS. JONES: Thank you, sir.

10 Member Hitzman.

11 MS. HITZMAN: Good morning. My name is Dana
12 Hitzman. I'm the commander of the auto theft division for
13 the Houston Police Department.

14 When Sergeant Carson introduced himself, he's
15 the metal theft unit. They handle the regulatory side;
16 the auto theft division handles the criminal
17 investigations related to catalytic converter thefts.

18 Just really want to thank everyone for the
19 opportunity to be on the committee and improving the
20 relationship between law enforcement and the stakeholders.

21 MS. JONES: Thank you, ma'am.

22 Member Porras.

23 MR. PORRAS: Good morning. For the record, my
24 name is Ricardo Porras. I am the task force commander, my
25 rank is a lieutenant, for the El Paso Police Department

1 Auto Theft Task Force. And again, thank y'all for
2 allowing me to be on this committee.

3 And I see that we've progressed a lot since our
4 first meeting. Our collaborations between law enforcement
5 and the MREs and metal recyclers and scrapyard personnel
6 has tremendously improved, and I look forward to bigger
7 and brighter and best things for all of us.

8 Thank you.

9 MS. JONES: Thank you, sir.

10 Member Prentice.

11 MR. PRENTICE: My name is Stewart Prentice.

12 I'm a partner at Techemet, L.P., which is one of the
13 largest catalytic converter recyclers out there. We
14 recycle the equivalent of about 14 million cars worth of
15 converters a year.

16 And it's a privilege to serve on this
17 committee, to meet the various members of law enforcement
18 that are put in charge of trying to enforce these very
19 difficult theft issues. It's a difficult job, and it's
20 renewed my enthusiasm to cooperate and to find better ways
21 to police this horrible situation.

22 Thank you.

23 MS. JONES: Thank you, Member Prentice.

24 Member Rodriguez.

25 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Jaime Rodriguez, I'm a sergeant

1 with the Laredo Police Department. I'm in charge of
2 supervising the auto theft task force field operations.

3 I enjoy getting to know y'all individually in
4 our gatherings apart from this. And I think we've come a
5 long way from the first meeting and I've learned a lot
6 from the tours. I appreciate the tours and the gifts that
7 came with the tours, I appreciate that. I'm not sure
8 about dirtying my shoes, but not too, too bad.

9 (General laughter.)

10 MR. RODRIGUEZ: I enjoy y'all's company. Thank
11 you for having me.

12 MS. JONES: Member Steigelman.

13 MS. STEIGELMAN: Good morning, everyone. My
14 name is Sheri Steigelman. I am the senior program
15 investigator with Texas Department of Public Safety.

16 I cover the entire Southeast Texas region of
17 the state doing metal recycling entity inspections. I'm
18 the boots on the ground, going in, checking what all these
19 places are buying, who they're buying from, what they're
20 buying, and take enforcement from there. It's
21 administrative enforcement, but that's my job.

22 MS. JONES: Thank you.

23 Member Taormina.

24 MR. TAORMINA: Good morning. It's Tchad
25 Taormina. I'm the legislative director for the Texas

1 Automotive Recyclers Association, and LKQ Corporation as
2 well, as you've seen yesterday.

3 On the TARA side, we're a statewide
4 organization of what you saw yesterday, salvage yards, the
5 same kind of operations throughout Texas. We're always
6 open for visits, tours, whether it be law enforcement or
7 anyone that needs to gain knowledge of what we do and what
8 you saw yesterday.

9 So I appreciate everybody coming out. I'm very
10 thankful that you were able to see our operations, and
11 again, come back any time, whether it be training. I do a
12 lot of training onsite with the fire department and the
13 police department, so you're always welcome to come back
14 anytime.

15 MS. JONES: Mr. Taormina also has an event that
16 is planned in September that is a huge opportunity for
17 networking. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

18 MR. TAORMINA: Yes. Tchad Taormina again.

19 So every year we have our annual conference,
20 like a lot of you folks have, as well as what you're
21 having in mid-July. Sharon hit on a lot of points as far
22 as being more involved with the automotive side. What
23 we'd like to do is obviously get more of the DMV side, the
24 law enforcement side at our conference.

25 So it's in Austin on September 5, that weekend

1 there. And we'll be in downtown and we're actually doing
2 some more yard tours. So we're actually going to go see
3 another salvage yard in Austin, and we'll have some hands-
4 on EV certifications within our membership.

5 So I invite everybody to come out. I'll leave
6 some information, as well as the raffle tickets -- you see
7 me going around here with this as well. I'm a board
8 director, so I do my due diligence on the sign-up for
9 this. It's a good conference and this year we're having
10 multi-state attendance as well, not just Texas.

11 So you're all welcome and I'll give you more
12 information if you need it.

13 MS. JONES: Perfect. Thank you, sir.

14 Member Willis.

15 MR. WILLIS: Good morning. I'm JR Willis with
16 PGM of Texas. We are also a large recycler of automotive
17 catalyts.

18 I thank everyone who was able to come out
19 yesterday and do a tour. I hope it was informative. We
20 got a lot of questions answered, and we welcome anybody
21 back anytime. Our goal here is to bring law enforcement
22 and the industry together to help fight converter theft.

23 Thank you for having me.

24 MS. JONES: You're welcome, sir.

25 For those who could not join us on the tour

1 yesterday, we toured LKQ and also PGM. The tours were
2 extremely informative to those of us who are not on that
3 side of the table.

4 There were a lot of questions, a lot of eye-
5 opening to see how both of these companies operate.
6 They're precise. It's truly a remarkable setup that you
7 both have, and thank you for welcoming us and for being
8 such stewards in your industry.

9 If you did not get to tour with Techemet, when
10 you do, you're going to realize that everything you saw at
11 LKQ and at PGM leads to Techemet. It's a great
12 opportunity, so if you have not seen Techemet, please do.

13 And then if you missed yesterday's tours, any of them,
14 both of them are willing to provide guidance and education
15 to all of us.

16 So thank you, gentlemen. All three of you,
17 thank you.

18 Also in attendance we have several of our task
19 force commanders, so at any given point if there's
20 something that needs to be addressed on the agenda, they
21 can come up, give their input. Thanks for the backup, and
22 I will call on you if I need you. So you can't hide, I
23 see you all.

24 And now we're going to have a few words from
25 our MVCPA director, William Diggs.

1 MS. JONES: Major Jones, thank you for that.
2 And I also want to say thanks to the guys that came in
3 from all over Texas, the task force commanders, for being
4 here today.

5 So in January of this year, we adopted the plan
6 of operations for SB 224. That's what the legislature
7 told us to do; that's what we've done.

8 I'll tell you that I think Major Jones might
9 have been reading some of my notes because I did want to
10 say, Tchad and Stewart and also JR, it's been phenomenal
11 to be able to come out and see your facilities. You know,
12 because what the legislature said that we don't want to do
13 is we don't want to interfere with the legitimate stream
14 of commerce. And we absolutely do not want to do it.

15 And it's really good to see how folks are doing
16 it right. Because I can tell from the amount of effort at
17 your facilities that you put into it, it appears that you
18 are doing things right. And so it's really good to see it
19 from the other side from that perspective, and so I think
20 that's going to help us get to where we need to be to
21 catching the bad guys is to see who's doing it right.

22 And so you guys are phenomenal. I've enjoyed
23 getting to know you and also getting to understand your
24 industry a little bit better. That's going to go a long
25 way for law enforcement and also our regulatory folks that

1 are also behind the scenes checking some of the records
2 and some of the cats as they are at your complexes.

3 So anyway, with that, again, I think we're
4 headed down a good path. I've enjoyed the last two
5 meetings, and I look forward to this morning.

6 Thank you, Major.

7 MS. JONES: Thank you, sir.

8 Also joining us on our tour yesterday, we had
9 two lobbyists and I want you guys to understand and
10 recognize that a lot of times you hear the word "lobbyist"
11 and you're like you want to run, but it's totally the
12 opposite. The lobbyists that our industry partners have
13 employed are truly trying to make a difference, not just
14 for the industry, law enforcement, the regulatory agencies
15 and departments. They are literally trying to make a
16 difference for all of Texas.

17 So thank you for joining us and for being such
18 great partners to our 224 Committee.

19 We now move on to agenda item number 4 and it's
20 a recap of our Houston meeting.

21 At our Houston meeting, our task forces, the
22 Houston Police Department and the Harris County Sheriff's
23 Office presented to us. It's interesting two different
24 agencies with the same concerns, the same issues, the same
25 challenges that were presented. But one thing is for

1 sure, both of those agencies are focused on doing what's
2 right for the citizens, for visitors, but also want to
3 formulate great partnerships with the industry.

4 And you'll hear again today there are
5 challenges within law enforcement and how to go about our
6 position. And one of those challenges was brought up by
7 Senator Carol Alvarado, who spoke before our committee in
8 Houston, and there is the difficulty of prosecuting the
9 automobile-related crimes despite some substantial
10 financial support.

11 I will say, we discussed this yesterday evening
12 informally, but a lot of our task force commanders have
13 requested prosecutors to be on their teams, to join our
14 task forces, to be onboard, to be dedicated to auto-
15 related crimes -- not just catalytic converters but any
16 crime that relates to catalytic converters and the auto
17 industry, anything dealing with a car.

18 I will ask that those of you who know the
19 prosecutors -- you know them, you speak with them. If at
20 any given time they have questions, they want to come to
21 us, they want to have a meeting just with us, they want us
22 to come to them -- I know prosecutors have annual
23 meetings. If that's what's needed from us to help them
24 understand that it's not just a property crime, the
25 effects, how it leads to the border, how it links to the

1 border, how it links to violent crime, we'll be more than
2 happy to make those connections for them.

3 Also in our meeting in Houston we discussed the
4 etching of catalytic converters. The auto industry
5 expressed that regulation could negatively impact
6 productivity and efficiency. On the law enforcement side,
7 law enforcement simply stated is that when we have etching
8 events, those etching events are important to the public
9 and they bring out a lot of citizens. And that's how the
10 interaction and the educating of citizens occurs.

11 And it's definitely not the intent to be a
12 burden to the auto industry but it's important that we
13 have these discussions. This is why this committee was
14 formed.

15 For this meeting, I would like to focus on what
16 are the needs of the citizens, what do we need to do to
17 take care of the citizens and the visitors. We've had
18 discussions of law enforcement, we've had discussions on
19 the industry. Today I would like for us to focus on, hey,
20 what do we need to do together, law enforcement, industry,
21 to take care of Texas.

22 We will now move on to agenda item number 5,
23 and that will be presented by Director Diggs.

24 MR. DIGGS: William Diggs, director MVCPA, for
25 the record.

1 Major Jones, thank you for the recap. I
2 thought the Houston meeting was excellent and we had a lot
3 of fluid conversation. So I want to talk a little bit
4 about the coordination with the partner state agencies,
5 both TDLR, Texas DPS, as well as Texas DMV as partner
6 state agencies.

7 We've worked closely with TDLR and Texas DPS to
8 enter into some interagency contracts to provide funding
9 for both equipment, FTEs, technology, to include some
10 software updates for those agencies, as well as we've been
11 working closely with Texas DMV to do the same, to provide
12 some additional staff, technology updates, to help us be
13 able to monitor and do the things that the SB 224 asked us
14 to do. So I think we're in a good place now. Interagency
15 contracts have been fully executed between the MVCPA,
16 Texas DMV, as well as the TDLR and Texas DPS.

17 So that would be my update there as far as
18 agenda item number 5.A. And then whenever you're ready,
19 I'd be glad to talk about 5.B, Major Jones.

20 MS. JONES: We'll now move on to agenda number
21 5.B.

22 MR. DIGGS: Good morning, Major Jones. Thank
23 you. William Diggs, MVCPA director, for the record.

24 So when it comes to our partner agency
25 meetings, the SB 224 plan of operation, we laid out and

1 said, you know what, we need to meet a couple of times a
2 month. We've been meeting every other Thursday. It's
3 been a pleasure working with Texas DPS, Texas DMV, and
4 then also TDLR. We've built some good relationships.

5 We've been talking about best practices during
6 the meetings, as well as providing some intelligence
7 sharing for some things that are going on around the state
8 that the three agencies are seeing and the things that
9 they are working on. And it's been some really, like I
10 said, fluid conversations. We've been able to put names
11 with faces, build those relationships.

12 We know now who to call on over at TDLR, as
13 well as the Texas DPS and Texas DMV, knowing who their
14 counterparts are. And so we continue those meetings every
15 other Thursday and will do so through the end of the year.

16 And so again, that's been a great opportunity
17 for us to have a better understanding how to do the things
18 that we need to do when it comes to catching the bad guys
19 when it comes to catalytic converter theft and making
20 sure, again, that the agencies -- that we don't interfere
21 with the legitimate stream of commerce and the things that
22 you guys are out there doing, you know, legitimately.

23 MS. JONES: So, Mr. Diggs, I know you guys meet
24 quite frequently. Are there any do-outs, any planned
25 strategies amongst the group?

1 MR. DIGGS: So actually, Major, as we speak
2 we've got the agencies, they coordinate together during
3 these meetings. They're able to provide intelligence to
4 one another, and obviously some of that could or may or
5 may not be sensitive. And so some things that we're doing
6 behind the scenes are some things that we wouldn't
7 actually share in a public meeting.

8 MS. JONES: Okay. But you have some do-outs?

9 MR. DIGGS: Yes, ma'am.

10 MS. JONES: Okay, perfect.

11 Are you ready for 6.B, or did you incorporate
12 that together?

13 MR. DIGGS: I'm ready to go ahead and move
14 forward this morning.

15 We've got a couple of folks from the Texas DMV
16 here to provide an update, but I wanted to ask Deputy
17 Executive Director Roland Luna, sir, did you have any
18 comments this morning that you wanted to make prior?

19 (No audible response.)

20 MR. DIGGS: Okay. Thank you, sir. Thank you
21 for being here as well.

22 And so with that, I'm going to go ahead and
23 call up Corrie Thompson -- she is the Enforcement director
24 for Texas DMV -- as well as Annette Quintero. She is the
25 Vehicle Titles and Registration director for the DMV.

1 If y'all would please come up and just provide
2 us with an overview of the things that you are doing
3 behind the scenes to help support SB 224 plan of
4 operation. Thank you.

5 MS. THOMPSON: Corrie Thompson. I'm the
6 director of the Enforcement Division for the Texas
7 Department of Motor Vehicles. And historically, the
8 Enforcement Division has been charged with the
9 administrative regulation and enforcement of the motor
10 vehicle sales and distribution industry. And so SB 224
11 and the implementation thereof does put us into a
12 different sphere where we're going to be looking at
13 records that our licensees are maintaining for catalytic
14 converter repairs.

15 So in preparation for that, we're looking at
16 things like what's the volume of licensees that we're
17 looking at regulating. So we have a total of 22,000
18 licensees in the state, and this bill does not cover
19 regulation over all of those licensed entities. It covers
20 our franchised dealers and our independent GDN holders, so
21 our used car dealers.

22 And we do have information from our licensing
23 division that pertains to the volume of franchised dealers
24 and where they provide service to vehicles, and so there
25 we're looking at about 3,000 entities and service

1 locations. And with regard to our independent dealers,
2 we're going to have to start gathering that data. That's
3 not something that we currently maintain.

4 But we've been making enhancements to our
5 system. We have been providing rule amendments to update
6 to include regulation based on Senate Bill 224, and so
7 we're doing things that are going to allow us to gather
8 information on our independent GDN holders who are doing
9 these types of repairs.

10 So we had a Board meeting last week wherein we
11 made a proposal for some rule amendments. And what we've
12 talked about is adding some application questions in, so
13 asking people do you do repairs that touch catalytic
14 converters, if so, please tell us a the point that we're
15 licensing you where you conduct those repairs so that we
16 can start building a database of these independent GDN
17 holders who do this type of work.

18 We've also put in the recordkeeping
19 requirements that come with implementation of the bill.
20 So letting them know about the two-year retention period,
21 knowing the content of the requirement, including the
22 description of the item that was removed from the vehicle,
23 the name of the person associated with the transaction, as
24 well as the date that the transaction occurred.

25 And then, of course, we're adding in the

1 sanction authority that the department now has in order to
2 be able to impose violations on entities who violate the
3 provisions of the bill in accordance with Occupations Code
4 2305. So we have added those specific violations that
5 will allow our investigative and attorney staff to both
6 cite those violations as we find them and then pursue
7 administrative enforcement.

8 And I'm sure many of you are familiar with
9 administrative enforcement; some of you have mentioned it
10 previously in just this meeting. So we do not have
11 criminal reach. Our administrative enforcement includes
12 sanctioning the licensees in the form of an administrative
13 penalty but also up to and including revocation of their
14 license. We also do work very heavily with law
15 enforcement where we see criminal offenses that we need to
16 refer over to appropriate entities and we do plan to do
17 that as well as part of this work.

18 I have 120 people within the Enforcement
19 Division. I have approximately 40 motor vehicle
20 investigators. And as part of implementation of a
21 separate bill, House Bill 718, or the metal plate bill,
22 I'm gaining new staff to build a dealer compliance
23 services section within Enforcement.

24 And our agency's plan is to currently utilize
25 existing motor vehicle investigative staff to start

1 conducting these reviews, going out to these licensed
2 entities, asking for these records. And then as I gain
3 new staff coming on from 718, we'll also utilize that
4 staff, too, to conduct the work that's necessary to
5 implement the bill. And in doing so, hopefully we'll be
6 able to reach more ground than we would with just using
7 one section or the other because, again, we're talking
8 about thousands of licensees. And if I utilize both of
9 these sections, approximately 60 people to do this work
10 and we want to make sure we're covering as much ground as
11 efficiently as possible.

12 So we've done several communications. Back in
13 April we communicated out to our stakeholder groups -- so
14 the biggest groups, the franchised dealer association,
15 TADA, as they're known, and the independent dealer
16 association, the Texas Independent Automobile Dealers
17 Association, to let them know that this was coming. So
18 they are going out and making efforts to spread awareness
19 to their entities, their membership, about actions that
20 are coming with the department.

21 We also sent out a formal communication on June
22 6 to the dealer community. And so now they have direct
23 awareness, too, of the agency's plan to start
24 implementation efforts here, and we anticipate that that
25 work for us will begin on September 1.

1 We presented our rules last week for proposal
2 at our Board meeting and they're open for public comment
3 now until August 12. And we do plan to adopt those rules
4 at our October Board meeting, but again, we will begin
5 doing this work before then.

6 MS. QUINTERO: Good morning. Annette Quintero,
7 Vehicle Titles and Registration Division director.

8 My division, along with the Technology
9 Division, works on an application we call webSALVAGE. For
10 those of you who are not aware of what webSALVAGE does and
11 how webSALVAGE is utilized, it's an application that
12 allows entities to submit salvage and non-repairable title
13 applications to the department. It allows insurance
14 companies to report owner-retained vehicles which are
15 vehicles the insurance companies paid a claim on but did
16 not take possession of the vehicle because the owner kept
17 the vehicle.

18 It also allows insurance companies and salvage
19 pool operators to submit original title applications to
20 county tax offices for their review and approval of their
21 application. This happens on vehicles where the insurance
22 companies took possession of and paid the claim on the
23 vehicle but did not meet the statutory threshold to be
24 considered salvage or non-repairable. An example of this
25 is an unrecovered stolen vehicle or hail-damaged vehicles.

1 So I tell you all that to explain kind of what
2 is the application and the platform where we communicate
3 with these entities and then explain in a little while the
4 work that we are doing to make enhancements to the
5 reporting functionality. So our future plans for the
6 webSALVAGE application are to expand that functionality,
7 the electronic titling functionality to metal recyclers
8 and used auto parts recyclers.

9 Tchad, we talked about that a little bit
10 yesterday. This will allow these entities, as well as
11 salvage dealers, to electronically surrender ownership of
12 and report a vehicle to the department that was obtained
13 for purposes of dismantling, scrapping and destroying.

14 So SB 224 also provided us with the opportunity
15 to bring in a full-time employee, someone who can augment
16 our staff, become the subject matter expert on all things
17 catalytic converter, SB 224, auto theft related, and be
18 the sort of conduit between the Vehicle Titles and
19 Registration Division and the MVCPA. What we're hoping to
20 accomplish is that this person will learn all the things
21 that there is to learn about webSALVAGE, first, the
22 application, two, the reporting requirements that are
23 required in SB 224, and then build the policies, the
24 procedures, the enhancements to the application to be able
25 to support the work that SB 224 has required us to perform

1 and also law enforcement, and then to assist Corrie and
2 her team in being able to facilitate kind of the
3 compliance portion of the SB 224 bill.

4 So we are in the middle of hiring that position
5 and bringing that position on. That person will be the
6 liaison, again, between Vehicle Titles and Registration
7 and the MVCPA. And so we really are hoping that subject
8 matter expertise and giving somebody the opportunity to
9 really dive in will broaden our ability to provide -- will
10 deepen the knowledge that we have related to catalytic
11 converter theft and any other issues auto theft related
12 that the department can support law enforcement in and
13 provide some innovative solutions that we can work towards
14 in our future.

15 MS. JONES: What are your plan askings, if any,
16 from the MVCPA grant that are out there? We have plenty
17 of grants, we definitely have a grant for 224, so what are
18 your plan askings for grants.

19 MS. THOMPSON: Thank you. Again, Corrie
20 Thompson, director of the Enforcement Division.

21 I'm glad that you asked that. I had planned to
22 cover that in my initial remarks.

23 So as we go into implementation of this in
24 September and we start gathering that data to guesstimate
25 the number of independent dealers that we're going to need

1 to cover, I do anticipate that there will be a need to
2 seek additional FTEs to cover that work. And so we'll be
3 developing those metrics and building that information
4 concerning the actual volume of dealers that we're going
5 to need to cover. And then we plan to come back to MVCPA
6 to let y'all know what our specific need regarding
7 additional FTEs will be in the future.

8 MS. JONES: Great to hear that.

9 You mentioned that you're not -- of course, you
10 don't have enforcement. You mentioned working with law
11 enforcement. How do you send referrals? What is the
12 mechanism of sending those referrals, and then what is the
13 outcome of those referrals?

14 MS. THOMPSON: Corrie Thompson, director of the
15 Enforcement Division again.

16 So regarding current referrals, if we identify
17 any offenses during the pendency of our administrative
18 cases, it would be just like any other violation now
19 currently that we identify that has a criminal component.

20 We have contacts with law enforcement or we establish
21 contacts as we move through cases because we have
22 investigators located throughout the state. We have
23 investigators that actually office in some task force
24 offices up in the Fort Worth area, so we do have existing
25 relationships.

1 What physically does the referral look like?
2 It looks like a send of a formal letter letting somebody
3 know in the appropriate law enforcement entity what we've
4 identified. We try to package up and provide all the
5 evidence that's been gathered as part of our investigation
6 so that we can pass that on to the appropriate law
7 enforcement entity to see fit whatever action they believe
8 they can take forward. And on the back-end, we are
9 frequently asked to come -- if something is going to be
10 taken on by a prosecutor, we are frequently asked to
11 provide affidavit information, to provide live testimony
12 to support the motor vehicle investigative side of our
13 findings.

14 And we also have a law enforcement assistance
15 team within Enforcement that is working daily to
16 communicate and provide education to law enforcement
17 officers on TxDMV operations. And so outside of those
18 specific case referrals, if anybody is uncertain whether
19 or not something that they've identified in the course of
20 their work, you know, is this for DMV handling, who is
21 most appropriate to handle this. I know that there is a
22 lot of different criminal/administrative agencies that
23 handle things. We have DPS that does both criminal and
24 regulatory actions.

25 Sometimes we don't know who to go to to get the

1 information moving forward, and we all know that you have
2 to get it into the right hands to get movement on what we
3 need to move forward. And so that team has made great
4 efforts in communicating with law enforcement and if
5 anybody has questions about how to connect with them after
6 the fact, they're also very good at working with law
7 enforcement on getting motor vehicle record information,
8 temporary tag data, and in the future, metal plate data,
9 over to law enforcement so that we can help make
10 efficiencies in criminal offense identification and
11 enforcement as well.

12 MS. JONES: When you guys are having the
13 regular meetings, are those part of the discussions like
14 how to make sure that as a group that you reach far and
15 wide?

16 MS. THOMPSON: So are you referring to the 224
17 partner agency meetings?

18 MS. JONES: Yes, ma'am.

19 MS. THOMPSON: Yes, we've had discussions. And
20 actually through having those meetings, it's been very
21 beneficial to identify counterparts in other agencies, DPS
22 and TDLR. I think many of us before having those partner
23 meetings weren't aware of who handles the parts recycling,
24 who handles the metal recycling entities in those
25 agencies.

1 And yes, those meetings have been very
2 beneficial in helping us identify where we need to get
3 information to, not just for implementation of 224 but
4 also for implementation of the safety inspection
5 elimination bill. We've got the DPS contacts that we need
6 now in order to make sure that we're implementing that
7 most effectively as well.

8 MS. JONES: Okay. Perfect. Great to hear.

9 Committee members, do you guys have any
10 questions as it pertains to your industry or regulatory
11 law enforcement? Do you guys have any questions for them
12 or guidance, suggestions, ideas?

13 Member Doran.

14 MR. DORAN: Member Doran. Great to be with you
15 today, good to see you again.

16 One thing that is on our minds, as the
17 department is sort of putting out for publication a suite
18 of different rules and regulations -- one is either Texas
19 Administrative Code 215.123 or 124, I forget which. But
20 it's a rule that would allow for the performance of
21 warranty repairs offsite using essentially mobile vans and
22 so on and so forth. I think at this point, aside from
23 General Motors, we're not aware of any other manufacturers
24 or distributors that are supportive of this initiative at
25 this point in time.

1 But the rule as drafted would be rather wide
2 open and could grant the dealer the ability to perform
3 these repairs using untrained, unlicensed subcontractors.

4 And so these subcontractors, at least based on the
5 language of the rule, would not need to be background
6 checked. They don't have to be properly trained. They're
7 not familiar with the ways in which a manufacturer or
8 distributor wants to keep their records.

9 And so I think, long story short, criminals are
10 very smart and I don't want us to see a bunch of vans
11 going around to Walmart parking lots or in people's
12 driveways that purport to be subcontractors associated
13 with a car dealership performing a purported warranty
14 repair in somebody's driveway and in reality they're
15 removing a catalytic converter. Or they're removing a
16 catalytic converter and taking the cannister of the
17 precious metals out of it and then returning that -- I'll
18 call it shell of a catalytic converter to the car dealer
19 who is then tasked with sending that back through the
20 chain of commerce to the distributor and the manufacturer.

21 So long story short, we think that law
22 enforcement should be involved in the policy discussions
23 around that particular proposed rule.

24 Thank you.

25 MS. THOMPSON: Thank you, Member Doran.

1 I would agree with that. I mean, it's
2 absolutely imperative on securing our operations at all
3 different levels. Right? So when a dealer is able to
4 subcontract with someone to do work that they're charged
5 with completing, it behooves them to make sure that they
6 have practices in place, whether or not that's included in
7 agency rule, to ensure that they're contracting with
8 someone who they can trust to complete that work.

9 We did talk about on the back-end yesterday
10 during the PGM tour about the potential for things being
11 removed beforehand, what actions those recycling entities
12 take to validate whether or not something has been removed
13 from the part when they take it into possession and how
14 they maintain records as people who are repeatedly doing
15 the same thing. And so we all have to keep our eyes open
16 and be vigilant of things like that and we have to all be
17 our enforcers in our own ways. Right? So we talked about
18 during one of the tours there's specific identification
19 requirements that you have to comply with.

20 We all know that you have the possibility of
21 having rogue employees work for you. Right? Like some
22 people have been with us for 20 years but something
23 happens in their lives that sends them down the wrong
24 path. It's a possibility.

25 It's a risk in the work that we do every day.

1 And again, we just have to make sure that we remain
2 vigilant with training our staff, making sure that we
3 subcontract with the appropriate people, and then
4 following up with staff to share the vision of making sure
5 that the work that we do is complete and that it's honest.

6 MR. DORAN: May I just make a brief -- this is
7 Member Doran.

8 So if, for simplicity's sake and to benefit law
9 enforcement, if it was helpful to carve out catalytic
10 converter replacements and repairs, exclude them from the
11 types of repairs that could be performed pursuant to that
12 rule, we would have no objection to that. So I just want
13 law enforcement to know that. That might make their lives
14 a little bit easier as they're driving around and they
15 don't have to make a judgment call as to should that van
16 be in that person's driveway or not and they see somebody
17 rolling under a vehicle and removing a catalytic
18 converter; they don't have to think about whether or not
19 that's a permissible repair. So we would certainly
20 support that exclusion if that was something DMV wanted to
21 entertain.

22 Thank you.

23 MS. THOMPSON: And so just as a point of
24 clarification, Member Doran, you're stating that the rule
25 language as it exists, if it specifically excepted out the

1 mobile repair of catalytic converters --

2 MR. DORAN: We would have zero opposition to
3 that from my company. And I can't speak for the other
4 automotive companies but I have a strong feeling that they
5 would be supportive of law enforcement, if that was a
6 helpful fix to have.

7 Thanks.

8 MS. JONES: Any other comments? Member
9 Foreman, sir, go ahead -- Taormina, sorry.

10 MR. TAORMINA: Tchad Taormina, LQK/TARA.

11 Quick question on the enforcement side.
12 Obviously you saw vehicles yesterday and a large
13 percentage, if not all, the vehicles you saw on my lot are
14 non-repairable salvage. On the flipside of it, on the
15 dealer's side with the requirements that they are -- and I
16 only see replacing a catalytic converter if you're
17 rebuilding a car -- could you kind of hit on the necessary
18 requirements of the component part?

19 Like in our industry we're required to end-of-
20 life each component part and have record of it. So on the
21 other side of it when a vehicle is getting fixed and
22 they're replacing the catalytic converter, what kind of
23 inspections or what do you look for as far as
24 documentation of the component part of a catalytic
25 converter when you're doing inspections?

1 MS. THOMPSON: So as I mentioned initially --
2 Corrie Thompson, director of the Enforcement Division for
3 the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles, again.

4 As I mentioned before in my opening remarks, SB
5 224 puts the Department of Motor Vehicles into a new
6 sphere. So Member Doran mentioned warranty work and so
7 there are provisions in our rules that speak to how a
8 manufacturer reimburses a dealer for parts and labor
9 associated with warranty work. The department is charged
10 with regulating motor vehicle sales and distribution and
11 this is the first time that Enforcement is touching the
12 repair aspects of dealer involvement with the community.

13 And so we're going with the requirements as
14 stated in the statute in Occupations Code 2305 which says:
15 A description made in accordance with the custom of the
16 trade for the volume of catalytic converters sold or
17 transferred.

18 And so we all know, and we learned in some of
19 the tours yesterday, that there is not always specific
20 identifying markers and that there is an attempt to build
21 databases as new catalytic converters come on the market.

22 And so what we would do is we would look to industry as
23 to what meets that requirement for a description in
24 accordance with the standard for that specific part.

25 MR. TAORMINA: Just one more thing to add. You

1 know, we do get calls, insurance companies we have to
2 continuously educate as far as a used catalytic converter
3 and the doubts of even trying to entertain putting a
4 catalytic converter from our industry back into a vehicle
5 as being repaired.

6 So the titling dictates a lot. But again, the
7 kind of direction I go with within our industry is to
8 ensure, just like you saw, the security measures and
9 everything as far as in the life-end catalytic converters.

10 But just like we all know, some of these catalytic
11 converters that are getting repaired and put back on cars
12 are just happening.

13 And that's what we do and what you saw
14 yesterday as far as the security measures and the
15 accountability for the end-of-life of these catalytic
16 converters. Just a quick comment.

17 MS. THOMPSON: Corrie Thompson, director of the
18 Enforcement Division for TxDMV.

19 I did want to provide some context to Member
20 Doran's comment. So the rules that he's speaking to were
21 part of the proposal package at the TxDMV full Board
22 meeting last Thursday. So we are conducting some rule
23 reviews.

24 We have a 718 rule package up for consideration
25 as well as a number of other amendments that we're making

1 to our rules. And so rules will be placed in the *Texas*
2 *Register* for public comment; they're already there and
3 they are open for comment until August 12.

4 MS. JONES: Any other comments? Member
5 Foreman, do you have anything?

6 MR. FOREMAN: Member Todd Foreman, for the
7 record.

8 So what I'm understanding is you are going to
9 be regulating just those repairing as far as dealerships;
10 all the others that can do repairs won't be reporting to
11 you. Correct?

12 MS. THOMPSON: Correct. So the Texas
13 Department of Motor Vehicles is over all licensed motor
14 vehicle dealers, and motor carriers on the side. So we
15 have franchised dealers, we have independent dealers, we
16 have salvage dealers.

17 Solely salvage dealers are specifically
18 excluded from the provisions of this bill. So this will
19 cover our franchised dealers that do repairs at those
20 3,000 locations that I mentioned earlier, as well as any
21 of our independent dealers who are conducting catalytic
22 converter repairs as part of their business operations.
23 Yes.

24 And so what Annette was referring to earlier
25 when she was talking about webSALVAGE is what I would

1 like, as my vision -- so we have DPS over the metal
2 recyclers, we have TDLR over the parts recyclers, and in
3 order to support SB 224 most completely, I believe that
4 future visioning for having mandated specific formats for
5 reporting into one system where we can pull that data out
6 and report on it would be beneficial for all of us to see
7 how effective we're being at implementing the bill. And
8 so Annette was speaking to updates to that system to allow
9 us to have a space where people could electronically
10 report something that's currently a paper form.

11 MR. FOREMAN: Member Todd Foreman again.

12 That's what I was looking at. Because there
13 will be the normal generated catalytic converters from
14 these businesses, so this will show that there's an
15 anomaly if somebody is generating more. And I was
16 wondering if this would be available to law enforcement
17 and others.

18 MS. THOMPSON: Corrie Thompson again.

19 Yes, I believe that it would be most beneficial
20 to allow us a full scope of reporting if we're able to get
21 there in the future.

22 MS. JONES: Any other comments?

23 MS. HITZMAN: Member Hitzman.

24 Just from a law enforcement perspective, I just
25 want to say thank you for the relationship with law

1 enforcement and DMV. Houston has also had an embedded
2 investigator. Unfortunately, they left for another
3 position, but DMV is working on replacing that position.
4 But in the meantime, the law enforcement assistance tool
5 has been really a great resource to our detectives.

6 So really just want to say thank you again for
7 the cooperation.

8 MS. JONES: Mr. Diggs.

9 MR. DIGGS: Thank you, Major Jones. William
10 Diggs, director MVCPA, for the record.

11 I did want to mention, Corrie had talked about
12 her law enforcement support team, and Major, you had asked
13 about how we were getting the word out, or something to
14 that effect. I did want everybody to know that during the
15 MVCPA conference on Wednesday, July 17, at the end of the
16 day there are a couple of staff members from Corrie's law
17 enforcement support team that are actually going to be
18 providing an overview of the type of things and support
19 that they can do for law enforcement. So we're actually
20 going to hear from them direct during our conference on
21 Wednesday afternoon.

22 MS. JONES: Perfect. Great to hear.

23 Any other questions, comments? Task force
24 commanders, do you have anything?

25 (No response.)

1 MS. JONES: Okay, perfect. We will recess now
2 until ten minutes after 10:00.

3 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

4 MS. JONES: Good morning. We'll call back in
5 session at 12 minutes after 10:00, and we will continue
6 with agenda number 6.A, Mr. Diggs.

7 MR. DIGGS: Good morning. William Diggs, MVCPA
8 director, for the record.

9 I wanted to say thank you to the Texas DMV, to
10 both Corrie and Annette, for the very informative update.

11 Thank you for that.

12 Now I'd like to call Captain Shawn Hallett up
13 from the Texas DPS to provide us with a little overview of
14 what DPS has been working on in support of SB 224.

15 So, Captain, thank you for being here. I know
16 this is your first day to present with the advisory
17 committee, so again, welcome. Thank you, sir.

18 MR. HALLETT: Thank you. Shawn Hallett with
19 the Texas Department of Public Safety. I'm a captain at
20 headquarters in the special investigative section. I'm in
21 the Criminal Investigations Division.

22 I'm here speaking on our behalf and also on the
23 Regulatory Services behalf, so take it easy on me. It is
24 day two and I hate that I have to follow those two,
25 because, my goodness. Don't ask me as many questions,

1 please.

2 So one of the things -- just a few highlights.

3 In the Regulatory Services, I know there's a bunch and
4 the Criminal Investigations helps out with this as well.
5 They're planning some MRE operations, undercover
6 operations, have some reliable information from civilians
7 as well as law enforcement partners.

8 In search of the Texas Online Metals has
9 corroborated a lot of this, that there's some unusual
10 activities going on. And so they're planning some
11 undercover operations around the state in order to tackle
12 those issues. Don't want to speak, you know, specifically
13 to what those are but that is going on around the state
14 right now.

15 One other thing that Regulatory wanted to cover
16 was that DPS is receiving multiple FTEs to assist in the
17 Regulatory Services, specifically regulation of catalytic
18 converter. They've already identified eight program
19 investigators and one case support specialist who are
20 going to be filled with spots from the MVCPA budget.
21 They've requested a total of 14 program investigators and
22 two case support specialists from the budget.

23 Hopefully those will be filled by the end of
24 the year. They're in the process of doing that hiring
25 right now. So that's kind of what's going on in the

1 Regulatory Services.

2 Wanted to highlight real quick a case that's
3 going on in the CID division, the Criminal Investigations
4 Division. The case is out of north Texas. Two of our
5 special agents up there are working along with NICB agents
6 and they've identified a major criminal enterprise
7 organization that is in auto theft.

8 To date they've recovered about \$300,000 worth
9 of equipment over, I believe, two search warrants. It
10 ranges from boats to trailers to vehicles -- I believe
11 some heavy equipment involved in there as well. So good
12 case that they're working up there in collaboration with
13 the NICB agents and they continue to work that right now.

14
15 I think they're into the financial aspect
16 through PayPal, Venmo and just kind of doing the financial
17 background of that case right now. So still working on
18 it, but been doing a good job so far.

19 MR. DIGGS: All right, Captain, thank you for
20 that.

21 Are there any questions for Captain Hallett
22 this morning from any of the members this morning?

23 MS. JONES: The task force commanders are
24 laughing at you. Should we pepper him? Should we pepper
25 him?

1 No questions for you, sir. Thank you.

2 MR. HALLETT: Thank you.

3 MS. JONES: We now move on to agenda item
4 number 7 -- no, 6.B. I need to wear my glasses, I
5 apologize. 6.B, sir.

6 MR. DIGGS: Major Jones, William Diggs,
7 director MVCPA, for the record.

8 So, unfortunately, TDLR is unable to be here
9 today. There were some things that came up and so they
10 are not present for their update.

11 I'll go ahead and say that we do have a fully,
12 like I said earlier, fully executed interagency contract
13 with TDLR as of the last couple of weeks, and we look
14 forward to supporting. I believe they had four FTEs and
15 some operational support and equipment for that agency,
16 and so we're looking forward to moving that forward and
17 working closer with them. But, unfortunately, they were
18 unable to attend this morning.

19 Thank you.

20 MS. JONES: Thank you, sir. May I proceed to
21 number 7 now?

22 We'll now proceed to agenda item number 7.
23 Number 7 is the San Antonio Task Force, and I'm excited to
24 hear everything they have to say, especially since to get
25 through and get to San Antonio to go down south, you've

1 got to pass through San Marcos when you're on 35. You
2 have to pass through Austin, depending on where you go if
3 you're coming on 35. Austin could not be here but I can
4 guarantee you that whatever you have is what Austin has.

5 MR. JOHNSON: Good morning. I'm Lieutenant
6 Nick Johnson with the San Antonio Police Department. I'm
7 the task force commander for the Regional Auto Crimes Task
8 Force.

9 Next slide, please.

10 So a little bit about San Antonio ReACT. The
11 primary focus and followup investigations that we conduct
12 on are on the theft of vehicles and the unauthorized use
13 of motor vehicles. Our forgery unit, they focus heavily
14 on the theft of vehicle by fraud.

15 And then our property crimes task force within
16 SAPD is tasked with the theft of vehicle parts and
17 accessories, burglary of motor vehicles and the catalytic
18 converter thefts. And that's just based off the numbers
19 that we're facing and the staffing that we have within
20 those units.

21 Next slide, please.

22 Historically, based off of 2021 to present,
23 based on the new system that we have -- we have a Mark 43
24 system that we went to so this is the best accurate data
25 we can get. The vehicles that have most often been

1 targeted for catalytic converter thefts are the Mitsubishi
2 Outlanders, Toyota Tundras and Toyota Tacomas. And what
3 we've seen over the past several years from 2021 on is a
4 pretty steady decline, with approximately 2,200 in 2021,
5 up to our peak at about 3,300 in '22, and then a steady
6 decline into 2024. We're at about 48 year to date.

7 Next slide, please.

8 And this is on a graph by month and the next
9 couple of slides will kind of explain how we're
10 interpreting this data and why we think we see this
11 decrease.

12 This slide right here, we all know that the
13 precious metals kind of drive the demand, what they can
14 get on the back-end there. So rhodium prices kind of
15 overlaid with our monthly reported catalytic converter
16 thefts. And you can kind of see there is a correlation
17 there in rhodium.

18 Next slide, please.

19 And then the palladium cost as well, you can
20 see where it drops off there and we think that also has an
21 influence. Platinum prices kind of stay steady
22 throughout, so you're not going to see that.

23 Next slide, please.

24 And we think this also had a pretty good
25 impact -- is the SB 224 going into effect, where we see

1 that kind of drastic drop off in September of 2023.

2 Next slide, please.

3 So as a kind of recap on this. The price
4 decline of precious metals we think had a pretty good
5 impact on it, the additional criminal penalties created
6 with SB 224, and the additional reporting requirements by
7 the MREs that went into effect in January.

8 The strategies that SAPD is currently using to
9 combat catalytic converter thefts. They continue their
10 inspection of MREs. That's not solely for the catalytic
11 converter thefts, but that's also for copper thefts and
12 other property crimes, related offenses that they're
13 doing.

14 Covert operations to target hot spots and
15 suspects, and then educating the public and patrol, heavy
16 focus on the in-service training on the new laws that went
17 into effect with SB 224, and then outreach to local
18 businesses and the public. For instance, I think on July
19 20 they're planning a catalytic converter VIN etching with
20 State Farm and the Insurance Council of Texas.

21 Some of the issues that we face. With the new
22 law of the unauthorized possession of catalytic converters
23 that went into effect at the end of '23, the DA is not --
24 I know we had a couple of cases initially that had gotten
25 rejected by them. The property crimes task force has been

1 working with the DA on accepting those offenses. But it
2 was just, I guess, the newness of the law that they didn't
3 feel comfortable moving with so they went underneath a
4 different offense to prosecute them.

5 And that concludes the update. Any questions?

6 MS. JONES: Can you please go back? I'll tell
7 you when to stop. Wait, stop, come forward. Go to 9,
8 okay, stop there.

9 Can you tell us -- I see you have the Farm and
10 Insurance Council of Texas -- what role do they
11 continuously play with your agency, specifically with the
12 task force?

13 MR. JOHNSON: So like as I mentioned, our focus
14 primarily is on the auto theft and UUMVs. So as far as
15 the catalytic converter thefts, it was primarily an
16 outreach to property crimes task force to assist with the
17 VIN etching. There are concerns on safety and liability
18 in conducting that VIN etching event, so they had reached
19 out. So the property crimes task force had pushed them
20 over to us, kind of requesting, and we've been working
21 with them.

22 I think we have a place set up on Brooks City
23 Base but they're trying to get a third party to actually
24 conduct the actual VIN etching on the catalytic converters
25 so doing the physical etching. So that's still being

1 worked out. So primarily the role that we're going to
2 fill in the ReACT grant is public outreach at that event.

3 MS. JONES: Okay. Have you had multiple
4 outreach events before?

5 MR. JOHNSON: In regards to catalytic
6 converters, no.

7 MS. JONES: All right. In general with auto
8 related?

9 MR. JOHNSON: Yes. The most recent we had, I
10 think, two VIN etching events this month. And then
11 previously at the end of May, beginning of June, we did
12 the Hyundai updates, security updates, so they came out
13 and did, I think, 1,400 security updates over on the west
14 side of San Antonio.

15 MS. JONES: And you answered -- my last
16 question was the participation from the citizens. So I'm
17 assuming that the citizens are highly involved and they
18 find it effective, in your opinion?

19 MR. JOHNSON: Yes, yes. When we put out those
20 events, we have pretty good showings on them.

21 MS. JONES: Okay, perfect.

22 Any questions from the committee?

23 MS. STEIGELMAN: Yes, ma'am. Sheri Steigelman,
24 for the record.

25 Mr. Johnson, out of curiosity, how often are

1 your guys doing inspections at MREs?

2 MR. JOHNSON: So as far as the ReACT grants,
3 zero. The property crimes task force is the one I don't
4 have their numbers.

5 When I was a property crimes sergeant, probably
6 back in '21, '22, we would conduct them weekly. When
7 House Bill 4110 went into effect, that was the primary
8 focus to help ensure compliance with the purchase of those
9 catalytic converters by the MREs. So that's kind of what
10 we had focused on was the MRE inspections, ensuring that
11 compliance, so those were conducted weekly back then. I
12 can't speak on it's been reorganized and centralized with
13 the San Antonio Police Department, so I can't provide that
14 number.

15 MS. STEIGELMAN: Okay. Thank you.

16 MS. JONES: Any other questions or comments?

17 Yes, sir, Member Willis.

18 MR. WILLIS: Yes. JR Willis with PGM of Texas.

19 Commander, in San Antonio we have a location
20 there where we service the City of San Antonio and
21 surrounding areas. I just wanted to make sure that you
22 are aware that we're there and that we're there to be a
23 resource if needed. Or if there's anything we can do to
24 assist with any of your efforts, please let us know.

25 San Marcos isn't that far away but we're very

1 active in San Antonio, so please let us know how we can
2 help.

3 MR. JOHNSON: Appreciate it.

4 MS. JONES: Is the San Antonio location
5 available for touring from the PD?

6 MR. WILLIS: San Antonio can be available but
7 it's just a storage and shipping warehouse, if you will.
8 So there's not somebody there all day every day. We have
9 employees that run around the city servicing the city, and
10 then consolidate and bring to San Marcos.

11 MS. JONES: So they would need to come to you
12 in San Marcos.

13 MR. WILLIS: There's not much to see in San
14 Antonio.

15 MS. JONES: Got it. Yes, sir. Thank you.

16 Any other questions, Mr. Diggs?

17 MR. DIGGS: Thank you, Major. William Diggs,
18 director MVCPA, for the record.

19 So, Commander Johnson, how many VIN etching
20 devices do you currently have?

21 MR. JOHNSON: We have two, primarily focus on
22 the one. The first one we had, the resolution was getting
23 pretty -- it was getting dated, so we primarily use the
24 one VIN etching for the glass.

25 MR. DIGGS: I was just going to say if you guys

1 need it, whenever we go into negotiations for FY25 grant
2 applications, if you don't already have additional VIN
3 etching devices in the app, please be sure and add some
4 and we'll be sure and support that.

5 MR. JOHNSON: Yes, sir.

6 MS. JONES: And in reference to the grant, the
7 224 grant, what are your askings?

8 MR. JOHNSON: San Antonio did not apply for the
9 SB 224 grant.

10 MS. JONES: Because you don't need it?

11 MR. JOHNSON: I wasn't in on those discussions
12 in regards to it, but I was advised that San Antonio
13 Police Department was not going to request for the SB 224
14 for fiscal year '24-25.

15 MS. JONES: Yes, sir. Thank you.

16 Any questions, other comments?

17 (No response.)

18 MS. JONES: Okay. Thank you, Commander.

19 We will now hear from the Travis County Task
20 Force.

21 MR. MEYER: Lieutenant Chris Meyer, Travis
22 County Sheriff's Office. I'm with the Sheriff's Combined
23 Auto Theft Task Force. I'm the program manager.

24 When Earl reached out to us, I did some
25 research throughout our department at the Travis County

1 Sheriff's Office, and we had a hard time coming up with
2 any reported catalytic converter thefts within the last
3 year. Multiple reasons of that is nobody really knows. It
4 hasn't been an issue with us.

5 We're more of a crime of opportunity rather
6 than organized crime within Central Texas. Also, we're a
7 little bit less populated than the City of Austin, that
8 could be a reason.

9 Our numbers were up but they're more of a crime
10 of opportunity that we would see from fleet vehicles that
11 would come to town to do some work. Those vehicles would
12 be hit and then we wouldn't get another reported incident
13 for six months, and then it was completely on the opposite
14 side of the county. So it was more of a crime of
15 opportunity and we don't have any true metal recycling in
16 our area that call on us.

17 So we didn't apply for the grant either and we
18 haven't had an issue with catalytic converter thefts
19 whatsoever.

20 Our task force is set up very similar to San
21 Antonio's where our property crimes section within our
22 sheriff's office handles all of the auto theft part
23 thefts. We in the task force mainly deal with auto
24 thefts, UUMVs, attempted auto thefts, and community
25 outreach for auto theft, as opposed to catalytic converter

1 education or theft investigation.

2 And I wish I had a cool PowerPoint but it would
3 be nothing, and I apologize for that. I could put zero up
4 there, but I tried our best. I researched our entire
5 department, I sat down with our very senior detectives in
6 property crimes, our law enforcement specialist,
7 lieutenants, sergeants, just give me something.

8 We even pulled in our report management
9 system -- everything we could, and if it is, it's one or
10 two here and there, nothing in the last 30 days. And for
11 whatever reason, we're lucky. I hear on the task force
12 commander meetings, you know, Houston, Fort Worth,
13 everyone getting hit. And I'm just like we don't have
14 that in Central Texas in Travis County, and I don't have a
15 reason why but we're just very fortunate that we don't
16 have that problem.

17 MS. JONES: I know you guys have the property
18 section. Minus the catalytic converters, how does it
19 look? What does it look like for auto theft in general,
20 or auto related crimes in general?

21 MR. MEYER: Auto related crimes, we're
22 averaging about 63 auto thefts a month reported in Travis
23 County. One interesting fact that we've seen is it
24 correlates -- City of Austin and Travis County
25 jurisdictions intermingle all over the county, so

1 interestingly enough, we'll have a vehicle stolen in our
2 county, they'll go into the City of Austin, they will
3 commit a crime, dump the vehicle, steal a different
4 vehicle, and then drive back to a different neighborhood
5 and dump that vehicle there.

6 So within the task force we've brought on a law
7 enforcement specialist who one of her jobs is tracking
8 where it's stolen, where it's recovered, so we can work
9 with the City of Austin and try to end that trend that
10 we've seen for the last two years.

11 But as far as auto thefts, our main thing is
12 we're getting hit, just like everybody else, Hondas, Kias.
13 We see a lot of RV theft and a lot of what I would call
14 light equipment, mini excavators, track steers, things
15 like that.

16 MS. JONES: Okay. Any questions, Mr. Diggs?

17 MR. DIGGS: Thank you, Major Jones.

18 And so, commander, I was just going to say I
19 recognize that both San Antonio and Travis County did not
20 apply for SB 224 grant funding. In FY24 we did allow for
21 a second round of applications. The MVCPA Board approved
22 that earlier in the year.

23 We've got a total now of 34 grantees for FY24
24 statewide, both in first and second round. In FY25 we've
25 got 24 grant applications from grantees. And so what I

1 may go back and recommend to the MVCPA Board is that
2 possibly we allow for a second round of FY25 SB 224
3 applications to allow some of the agencies around Texas
4 basically another bite at the apple.

5 Because I do want to make sure that even though
6 through negotiations and our standard MVCPA task force
7 motor vehicle theft funding, we can allow for some
8 additional equipment. I think it would behoove us to go
9 ahead and allow some of these agencies to take another
10 bite at the apple to rethink, you know, do we need to go
11 ahead and apply for SB 224 funding. The legislature has
12 allowed for just over \$30 million in FY25 for SB 224.

13 So I will be making that recommendation. And
14 so I did want to make sure that everybody knows there may
15 be another opportunity to seek out some additional funding
16 for catalytic converter theft and prevention in FY25.

17 So thank you for what you do and thank you for
18 the update today.

19 MR. MEYER: Yes, sir. Thank you. And I would
20 like to say, Captain, I did listen and my plan is to go
21 back and speak with our property crimes and talk about
22 these inspections and things we can do at the MREs.

23 I think that would benefit the citizens as a
24 whole and also kind of find out what's going on with what
25 we need to do to combat that. So thank you, Captain.

1 MS. JONES: Thank you, sir.

2 San Antonio, I should have asked you the same
3 question I asked him, sir. How many auto related crimes
4 are reported in the City of San Antonio?

5 MR. JOHNSON: Lieutenant Nick Johnson, San
6 Antonio Police Department and San Antonio ReACT Task Force
7 commander.

8 So currently our motor vehicle thefts, we're
9 sitting at about 73-, 7,400 which is about a 16 percent
10 decline from where we were in 2023. This month, obviously
11 these numbers are not official, but what we're pulling
12 from our Mark 43 system, we showed about 30 percent
13 decline from June of last year to June of this year. So
14 we are seeing a decline in the motor vehicle thefts.

15 We think that's driven primarily by the
16 Hyundais and Kias, the security upgrades. We have LPR
17 systems now with the Axon dash cams, and I think that's
18 also contributing greatly, and just general public
19 awareness getting put out to people, steering wheel locks,
20 locking their cars, doing everything that they should be
21 doing on their side. So that's for the motor vehicle
22 thefts.

23 The burglary of motor vehicles, still very
24 high -- I think last year probably around 21,000 for San
25 Antonio. It looks like we're down probably a little over

1 4 percent year to date from where we were in '23.

2 MS. JONES: I knew you had a lot of stolens.
3 Do you have an idea of if your stolens are from your city
4 and where they're going and then the recoveries, what's
5 the originating agency for those stolen?

6 MR. JOHNSON: In regards to our stolens, a lot
7 of the stuff that we're recovering locally is going to be
8 the Hyundais and Kias and then some of the older models.
9 We do have a pretty high percentage. It's kind of
10 becoming more obvious as we bring down our Hyundais and
11 Kias thefts, towards organized crime.

12 So we have dedicated detectives within our unit
13 that are strictly geared towards the high end pickups and
14 SUVs that are being run down to the border. So we're
15 seeing a lot of our recoveries for our higher end or newer
16 model pickups down along the border for the human
17 smuggling or crossing the border for cartel operations or
18 whatever they're doing down there with them.

19 MS. JONES: Okay. That's what I was looking
20 for. Perfect. Thank you, sir.

21 MR. JOHNSON: Yes, ma'am.

22 MS. JONES: Any questions? Gonna let him get
23 away?

24 (General laughter.)

25 MS. JONES: Thank you, Commander Johnson.

1 We will now move on to agenda number 9, New
2 Braunfels Police Department.

3 MR. CHRISTOPHERSON: Morning. Craig
4 Christopherson with the New Braunfels Police Department,
5 Criminal Investigations lieutenant.

6 And kind of bear with me here. We're the new
7 kids on the block so I'm going to kind of give you an
8 overall picture of what New Braunfels is doing and what
9 we've asked for and how much we appreciate the help.

10 So basically, New Braunfels has been listed in
11 the top 15 fastest growing cities in the United States
12 since 2012. We have no reason to think that's going to
13 stop. Right now the census says we're about 111,000. The
14 last rumor I heard is 120,000, and of course, that doesn't
15 include all the tourist population that comes to our water
16 park and the two rivers that everybody knows about, as
17 well as the motorists traveling on 35, up and down 35
18 every day.

19 As far as our department goes, we have 164
20 sworn, that's divided up into four divisions. Two of the
21 largest divisions are Patrol and Criminal Investigations,
22 and those are divided into 15 different districts
23 encompassing over 45 square miles.

24 Our catalytic converter thefts for 2022 was
25 259. In our estimate the loss was almost a million

1 dollars, and we ended up with five arrests. In 2023 it
2 was almost 500,000 and we had no arrests, and that was out
3 of 130 thefts that were reported.

4 Next slide.

5 So how it kind of goes down right now, the way
6 things would happen in our city is we're going to get a
7 call for a suspicious vehicle in a neighborhood. The
8 patrol officers obviously go out there and look for them.

9
10 This particular time, they located the vehicle
11 in a closed -- it was at night and it was at a closed
12 convenience store. Three suspects all inside, all of them
13 were from Houston, and that's kind of a recurring event
14 for us. They were all arrested for unrelated charges, but
15 when they inventoried the vehicle they found nine what
16 they believed to be freshly stolen catalytic converters in
17 the trunk.

18 The one person that called in from the
19 neighborhood was the only victim that we had. Through a
20 social media post that we put out, we had 175 responses,
21 which gives you an indication of how many people are
22 worried about their catalytic converter getting stolen or
23 already had it stolen -- 175 responses in just like a
24 couple of days. Unfortunately, our detective was happy
25 about that but not happy he had to contact 175 different

1 people to figure out if it was their catalytic converters
2 that were actually stolen.

3 He found out that it was actually over several
4 months with these people but they wanted their property
5 back or they wanted to be made whole with the situation.
6 He actually was able to identify every single one of the
7 victims from that evening and he did that by matching --
8 we had the catalytic converters and he matched them up
9 individually with the cut marks and the striations and
10 whatnot on the metal. That was the only way we could do
11 it. But we were able to charge every single one of them
12 additionally with engaging in organized criminal activity,
13 as well as theft of precious metals at the time because
14 this other legislation wasn't there.

15 Another instance that Mr. Willis probably
16 brought to light to us yesterday in our tour, he mentioned
17 the white Cadillac. We had a white Cadillac SUV. Again,
18 the report came in that there was catalytic converter
19 thefts possibly happening in a certain area.

20 They located the vehicle, two suspects were
21 arrested for possession of marijuana and some warrants,
22 and in the vehicle inventory they located three more
23 catalytic converters that had been cut off. For some
24 unknown reason, neither one of the suspects cooperated and
25 told where they got them from. They, too, were charged

1 with engaging in organized criminal activity and theft of
2 precious metals.

3 So our trends that we've seen here lately, just
4 like the other agencies have said -- we've had a large
5 decrease in the catalytic converter thefts. And I do
6 believe it's thanks to the value, as was already
7 mentioned, as well as the legislation.

8 What we're seeing as far as any reports that
9 have to do with unauthorized use of motor vehicles, we've
10 had about 53 reports of those so far this year. They're
11 coming to New Braunfels from San Antonio, Austin and
12 Houston. They're committing the burglary of motor
13 vehicles, they're committing bank jugging and catalytic
14 converter thefts.

15 And as they've already said, many of them we're
16 finding are armed. All they're doing in town is walking
17 up and down the road pulling door handles. Usually, they
18 find guns or they come with guns. We have several videos
19 of people that are actually standing outside somebody's
20 house with a gun watching while they're getting into other
21 cars.

22 Historically, what we have happen is somebody
23 in the neighborhood will call, there's a suspicious
24 vehicle. Our patrol guys are on it and they find them on
25 their way out of town, and nine times out of ten, a

1 pursuit ensues. We've had three pursuits in less than 24
2 hours.

3 The one that caused the problem up here, that
4 was us yesterday. I don't think these were theft related;
5 one of them was a DWI, but we do have an active pursuit
6 policy. We're careful about it as much as we can be, but
7 we're trying to get the word out where if you come to New
8 Braunfels, we're not going to stop, we're going to catch
9 you, and we do end up in San Antonio quite a bit.

10 As far as our stolen vehicles, ours are -- the
11 high end F250s is our number one right now, and like they
12 said, I think it's going down to the border. Followed up
13 with the F350 and F100, and then we sprinkle in some
14 Toyotas and GMCs. And not to be left out are the
15 tailgates and the tail lights.

16 Kind of like catalytic converters, we had a
17 huge increase in tailgates being stolen and all of a
18 sudden it dropped off. Tail lights and tailgates are
19 extremely expensive, and I think some of the efforts the
20 builders put in to keep the tailgates intact have helped.

21 So what we have as a PD to try to combat this
22 is what we call a street crimes unit that's been
23 developed. It's under the Criminal Investigations
24 Division still, but it's been developed to strictly focus
25 on high impact or high crime areas or gang offenders,

1 violent offenders, fugitives, short-term and long-term
2 narcotics investigations, and then technical and actual
3 physical surveillance. And the trick is it's proactive.

4 All of our patrol guys are so busy now that
5 they don't get a whole lot of proactive time. These guys
6 are strictly -- this is what they do, and we have an issue
7 come up and they focus on it immediately. They kind of
8 hate to see me coming, though, because if something pops
9 up, the chief says, hey, there's an issue over here,
10 they're the first officer I go to. And they always drop
11 whatever they're doing and they divide their efforts or
12 whatever they do, but it's a quick response.

13 It's comprised of eleven law enforcement
14 officers right now; some are plain clothes, some are
15 uniform. But we do have four plain clothes task force
16 officers that are attached to the FBI in San Antonio, as
17 well as U.S. Marshal Services and Homeland Security. So
18 we have resources through those connections, and it's
19 worked fantastic for us if we have anything big going on.

20 I won't get into the details, but we just last
21 week had an issue where technically it was a throat
22 slicing for a traffic issue. And the guy was fixing to go
23 to Germany, he had his tickets and he was leaving the next
24 day. But through our resources that we use with HSI, we
25 were able to find that out and we snapped him up pretty

1 quick once we figured out who he was. If we wouldn't have
2 had that resource, we wouldn't have been to do that that
3 quick.

4 We do have three plain clothes detectives that
5 do work out of our office or out of our building, as well
6 as right now we do have three uniformed detectives and
7 this grant would allow us to have two more that are going
8 to be used as uniformed, and then one, of course,
9 supervisor to supervise all those guys.

10 So what we're asking for is the two additional
11 uniformed SEU officers and all their associated equipment,
12 to include vehicles, as well as a fancy new Stop Stick
13 system that's on the front of the vehicle. Instead of
14 having to stand out and throw it out on the road, they
15 just drive up next to it and shoot it out the side and
16 they used that last night. It's very effective so far
17 with what we've seen.

18 Also purchase a covert bait undercover vehicle
19 that we can use for operations, put the vehicle out there
20 and you'll see shortly that it's not a usual police
21 vehicle. We can use it for undercover operations as well
22 because it blends in very well.

23 We're installing six pole-mounted LPR cameras.
24 Intentions are to put those on not the main arteries but
25 the secondary arteries coming into town -- like basically,

1 if you know the area, it's 46 South, 46 West -- because we
2 already have a process going for Interstate 35 on the
3 north and south end of town, cameras going in there as
4 well. Then ten more mobile license plate readers that we
5 can put around town as needed.

6 And then the engraving system. We have not
7 done any engraving events yet, but we're kind of working
8 on a plan to -- I spoke with NBU, our utilities company
9 and they obviously have lifts and whatnot in their bays to
10 work on their vehicles. And I'm trying to talk to them a
11 little bit about maybe partnering with them, and I think
12 we have a pretty good in there. And if not, we're going
13 to go to some of the other smaller businesses and work
14 with them.

15 As well as covert pedestal cameras -- which
16 I'll show you a picture of here shortly -- we can deploy
17 in like the beginning of neighborhoods where there are
18 gated entrances or even just one way in and one way out.
19 We have a lot of those neighborhoods. And streetlight
20 mounted cameras, and then like I said, the assistance in
21 completing IH-35 project which we do already have
22 agreements with TxDOT and that's probably three-quarters
23 of the way through the process, and that will get going.

24 My next slide, that is just an example of the
25 streetlight camera. The cool part about it is we can

1 monitor this remotely and we can put it in high crime rate
2 areas or where there's an increase in catalytic
3 converters. A lot of our converters, looking at the
4 history, were stolen from parking lots or there was a
5 travel trailer vendor and they got beat up, like 40 in one
6 night.

7 If we have a high crime increase anywhere, we
8 can put these out and NBU is the one that has to help us
9 do that. So it's an NBU truck that rolls out there, our
10 guy is with him, he has a cute little NBU hard hat and
11 everything looks good. And they can be monitored remotely
12 so when we do operations, they can sit there and watch
13 this and be nearby or they can watch it from the office
14 and see somebody is in the area.

15 I think my favorite one is this little pedestal
16 camera because it's so cute and innocent looking. It's
17 the same thing, you can watch it remotely. Anywhere you
18 go it's going to blend right in, and it can be installed
19 by us, it doesn't require anything extra. It has a 75-
20 foot power cable if you need it, but it also has
21 rechargeable lithium batteries, so it's a quick easy in,
22 quick easy out, nobody is going to notice it.

23 Next is the covert vehicle, not specifically
24 associated with law enforcement, I think you would agree
25 with that. But it's targeted, it's multi-purpose, it's a

1 vehicle that's targeted by catalytic converter thieves, as
2 well as blending in with every other vehicle around there
3 and we can put it out as a bait vehicle in areas that's
4 shown to have catalytic converter theft increases.

5 Creekside is a great area around here where we just have
6 tons of shopping and it's continuing to expand. And also
7 use it as a surveillance vehicle because it blends right
8 in.

9 Can't go anywhere without your cool little
10 binoculars. These would be image stabilization binoculars
11 so we can sit further away from the target that we're
12 trying to watch and still have a good view of what's going
13 on.

14 And then finally, the mobile tracking device.
15 We get a warrant to put it on a car, we have a suspect
16 vehicle, we put it on a car we want to know where they're
17 going to go. We can use that for catalytic converter
18 thieves as well as just wanting to know about the
19 whereabouts of anybody that's on our radar that we can get
20 a warrant for it to be put on, as well as affixing it to
21 the covert vehicle so just in case it doesn't go missing.

22 We will put it on our bait vehicle any time we're using
23 it.

24 And that is it. Hopefully I covered all your
25 questions.

1 MS. JONES: Great job.

2 Any questions from our members? I saw Tchad
3 taking pictures, I see smiles.

4 Go ahead, Mr. Diggs.

5 MR. DIGGS: Thank you, Major Jones.

6 And really appreciate you coming today, sir, to
7 give the update for New Braunfels, and we're excited about
8 having you as a new grantee with MVCPA and look forward to
9 a long relationship.

10 I did want to mention that John Gonzalez gave
11 an update back in Houston and he talked about some of the
12 street level enforcement that was occurring when it comes
13 to catalytic converters and talked about some of the VIN
14 etching. And we just heard New Braunfels talk about the
15 catalytic converters and having to match up some of these
16 cut marks and stuff like that to make a criminal case.
17 And so I'm going to continue to support VIN etching by law
18 enforcement. Right?

19 It's good public outreach, we have the tools to
20 do it, I think it makes sense. I realize we've also had
21 some good discussion from industry about how that might be
22 a heavy lift if we were tracking and marking catalytic
23 converters when they're coming in and having to manage
24 that, or even to the manufacturers of new motor vehicles
25 as well.

1 So I do believe this makes sense at the street
2 level for enforcement. I believe law enforcement can do
3 this all over Texas and we have the ability now to support
4 them through funding with VIN etchers and also we also
5 have been purchasing -- I'm hearing you talk about the
6 lifts. We have the ability to purchase some of these
7 portable type lifts so that you would be able to use those
8 in different areas, if it was safe to do so, to do the VIN
9 etching.

10 I did want to make everybody aware of that. It
11 makes nothing but sense when it comes to street level
12 enforcement. That way you're not having to match up some
13 of this stuff to make sure that you can make a case. If
14 we have the VINs on those cats, making those cases would
15 be a whole lot easier.

16 MR. CHRISTOPHERSON: Absolutely, sir. We do
17 appreciate the assistance.

18 MR. DIGGS: You bet. Thank you.

19 MR. CHRISTOPHERSON: If I may, I did mention
20 PGM. He did turn away the white Cadillac with the
21 converters, so the system is working. I don't know where
22 they got rid of them at but whether it was ours or not, he
23 did a great job in doing what he's supposed to do.

24 MS. JONES: Social media, how do you reach your
25 constituents, how do you reach the citizens? What

1 platforms are you using?

2 MR. CHRISTOPHERSON: So we used to have a
3 social media person for the PD but the city took him, so
4 now he's over all of the city social media. The biggest
5 one that we got the most responses from was Facebook, and
6 they also have Instagram and all the other stuff that I
7 have no idea how to work. But Facebook was our main intel
8 gatherer for that particular situation. They have a large
9 following, from what I'm being told, and that's important
10 for them.

11 MS. JONES: Okay. Can you recall the number of
12 stolen converters that you seized? Do you remember the
13 number?

14 MR. CHRISTOPHERSON: It was 130 last year --
15 that we seized? I think it was about 20 that we actually
16 seized after being stolen.

17 MS. JONES: So you have those in entrusted
18 property. What is the plan after the disposition of the
19 case and the case is done, what is your plan for the
20 converters?

21 MR. CHRISTOPHERSON: So after our tour
22 yesterday, the new plan would be to -- I don't know what
23 the original plan was because I don't think we've thought
24 that far ahead. But the new plan now that I would support
25 would be to get a destruction order from our DA after the

1 case is already complete and then we would take it to a
2 recycler like PGM or somebody that can actually put it to
3 good use and get rid of it the right way.

4 MS. JONES: That question has been coming up a
5 lot, not here but offline since we've been having our
6 meetings. And there's some agencies who have a lot more
7 than 20 and it's just been sitting there and the questions
8 started coming up like what do we do with them. Some of
9 them are taking them to just get them disposed of, get
10 them destroyed by a court order, of course, and so that
11 was part of a huge discussion that's been going on.

12 And also, I'm assuming that that will lead to
13 asset forfeiture, however the city decides to disperse of
14 the funding after you've taken them elsewhere. Also,
15 depending on what agencies are involved in the asset
16 forfeiture agreement, I know when you're on a task force
17 like Safe Street with FBI or you're in a task force -- you
18 don't even have to be on a task force, you stop a car for
19 DEA and there is asset forfeiture. I know that's how it's
20 distributed.

21 Just wondering about that. I'm not trying to
22 give away too many of our investigative techniques, so
23 that's why I'm being a little short with my questions.

24 MR. CHRISTOPHERSON: Yeah, absolutely. If
25 there was other agencies involved, it gets distributed

1 whatever the agreement is.

2 MS. JONES: Okay. Just wondering.

3 MR. RODRIGUEZ: I wanted to ask about your
4 relationship with the DA's office there in your location.

5 And the reason I'm asking you and not the other agencies
6 is because you actually put in for the SB 224 grant.

7 MR. CHRISTOPHERSON: Yes, sir.

8 MR. RODRIGUEZ: And if you plan on asking for a
9 DA to be specifically assigned to your task force in the
10 near future, and if not, why.

11 MR. CHRISTOPHERSON: We do have a good
12 relationship with the district attorney's office but we
13 haven't approached that yet because we're just getting our
14 feet wet this year, trying to figure out how everything
15 works and what we're going to do. We learned about that
16 at the last meeting and that was an interesting thought,
17 and I think she would be on board for it. I just want to
18 make sure that there's enough work and I haven't talked
19 with her enough about what we would be getting assistance
20 from her for yet. We're going to try to nail it down this
21 year and see what we're going to do and expand from that,
22 but that's certainly a very interesting idea.

23 MS. JONES: Perfect.

24 Member Doran.

25 MR. DORAN: Lieutenant, just a quick question.

1 When these things get over to the side where they're
2 being prosecuted, are you seeing where the criminals will
3 ever divulge information about the larger network that
4 they are using to dispose of these? Or are there ever
5 plea deals that are being cut where the prosecutors are
6 getting information about the organized criminal nature
7 and who the actors are in the larger sense?

8 MR. CHRISTOPHERSON: We actually haven't had
9 anybody prosecuted yet; it's still in the works. As a
10 general rule of thumb, I would guess maybe 90 percent of
11 it is no, they're not going to give us any other
12 information because they're going to get out sooner or
13 later, depending on what their sentence is, and they don't
14 want to rat out their buddies right now. But like I said,
15 we haven't actually went through that process complete yet
16 so I'm not sure what they'll do or what they'll even offer
17 at this point from the DA's office.

18 MR. DORAN: Okay. Thank you.

19 MS. JONES: Any other questions?

20 (No response.)

21 MS. JONES: Thank you, sir. Great job.

22 Hearing no more questions, we now move on to
23 agenda item number 9 -- agenda item number 10, our next
24 advisory committee meeting will be in Laredo -- is it
25 October 3?

1 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, October 3, from what I've
2 been told.

3 MS. JONES: And where is that meeting going to
4 be, sir?

5 MR. RODRIGUEZ: The meeting is going to be at
6 the Tru Hilton. It's right near the airport, so for those
7 that are flying in, you don't have to travel too far down
8 the road to get to that motel.

9 MS. JONES: And you have activities?

10 MR. RODRIGUEZ: So right now we're working on a
11 tour, maybe an MRE tour down there, or the bridge tour.
12 I'm more interested in the bridge tour for y'all. I'm
13 going to be reaching out to CBP so we can get a tour for
14 those that can make it and then see how they can provide
15 it for us.

16 MS. JONES: Perfect. Thank you, sir.

17 Any questions on agenda item number 10?

18 (No response.)

19 MS. JONES: Hearing none, we move on to agenda
20 item number 11, it's the 2024 MVCPA Conference update.

21 We are basically there. Our conference is the
22 week of July 15. During that week we will have a grant
23 committee meeting where the task force commanders will
24 present their grant applications and needs they want. And
25 also during that week, the last day which is Friday, then

1 the grants will be awarded to those task forces.

2 Our conference is that week, of course, and
3 it's Thursday night and every single of that week we have
4 networking opportunities for industry, for our sponsors,
5 for law enforcement, our analysts, the financial persons,
6 regulatory staff from different agencies. Every single
7 day we have networking opportunities.

8 There's no reason why if you needed a contact,
9 you don't leave with a contact for that week. There's no
10 reason for that. A lot went into it to make sure that
11 it's very successful and productive for everyone involved.
12 So we have that, that's our week.

13 And then we are planning, slowly, our 2025
14 conference. We are planning that for Dallas area. We
15 have a hotel; we're still in the beginning phases of
16 negotiations, but the plan is for Dallas. And once we
17 have those details secured and the MVCPA Board's approval,
18 then we'll definitely give additional information.

19 Something that we discussed actually last week,
20 and I brought it up a few times to a few other people, is
21 that from day one when we had our very first meeting and
22 Mr. Bresnen brought it to all of our attention, mainly law
23 enforcement, that there was a disconnect between law
24 enforcement and those we serve as far as the metal
25 recycling industry, the auto dealership industry. And so

1 as we're having these meetings, we're seeing we're forging
2 together, but I also think as a whole all of us can do
3 better.

4 So I have a small proposal, it's an ask and
5 it's going to include TDLR, Texas DMV. But I'm asking
6 that perhaps in 2025 that we have a two-day conference, a
7 networking conference but it includes the auto industry,
8 it includes your lobbyists, it includes whomever we need
9 to bring in, those who represent the public, law
10 enforcement, to have a two-day discussion about what we
11 need to do. You guys present to us, everyone presents and
12 leaves there with a better forged relationship and
13 understanding of each other and what our constraints are.

14
15 You're going to hear a lot about prosecution.
16 I was asked a question, hey, we gave you guys a lot of
17 money -- you guys meaning law enforcement, meaning
18 MVCPA -- what about prosecution, we're not seeing a lot of
19 prosecution. We can talk about that there. We can keep
20 talking about that.

21 So I just feel that we've gotten so far
22 together. We're doing a great job. Our conference this
23 year in July, there's a lot of information that is law
24 enforcement sensitive so we cannot have the general public
25 in there.

1 We cannot have some of you who are on this
2 committee, unfortunately, you cannot attend some of those
3 trainings. But if we have a different type of conference
4 where we're educating everyone, not just law enforcement,
5 if we're educating everyone just as a whole, I think that
6 would be beneficial. So I'm going to ask for TDLR to
7 please participate in that.

8 DMV, Roland, I already know that you and
9 Daniel, you guys are a yes. I don't have to ask; I
10 already know that we have your support.

11 And of course, I can speak for the Texas
12 Department of Public Safety, you will have our support.

13 And I'm asking our committee members, those of
14 you in the private industry, if we could have your support
15 as well. And the staff for MVCPA are going to kill me
16 because they're the ones who have to make it happen, but
17 we will make it happen. We work well together, and we'll
18 make that happen probably maybe in one of the colder
19 months so not to overtask MVCPA and DMV, but that is the
20 plan.

21 And our commanders, they're going to be part of
22 those discussions with their thoughts. This is what's
23 working in a rural area, this is not working, how does
24 this affect us in San Antonio, if it does not, how does
25 this affect Dallas, Houston, definitely the border, that's

1 huge. We know that a lot happens, all those stolens from
2 San Antonio, apparently they're going to New Braunfels,
3 but we do have a lot literally going towards the border.

4 And we've had executive briefings on the
5 stolens and how they end up in Mexico and what's happening
6 in Mexico with certain types of pickup trucks. So I think
7 it's just important that we continue our discussions but
8 more inclusive to include all partners and the community.

9 Those are my thoughts there for our two-day
10 mini conference for our industry, inspectors, regulators,
11 for all of those.

12 Ms. Cassandra, do we have any public comment
13 for agenda item number 12?

14 MS. FLYNN: Cassandra Flynn, MVCPA
15 administrative assistant. No, Madam Chairman, there are
16 no comments at this time.

17 MS. JONES: Okay, perfect.

18 We move to agenda item number 12 which is
19 adjournment.

20 Do I have a motion?

21 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Member Rodriguez, motion.

22 MS. JONES: A second?

23 MR. PORRAS: Member Porras, I second.

24 MS. JONES: Thank you, gentlemen.

25 We are officially adjourned at eight minutes

1 after 11:00.

2 (Whereupon, at 11:08 a.m., the meeting was
3 adjourned.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

MEETING OF: TxDMV MVCPA Senate Bill 224 Advisory
Committee

LOCATION: San Marcos, Texas

DATE: July 2, 2024

I do hereby certify that the foregoing pages,
numbers 1 through 81, inclusive, are the true, accurate,
and complete transcript prepared from the verbal recording
made by electronic recording by Nancy H. King before the
Texas Department of Motor Vehicles.

DATE: July 16, 2024

/s/ Nancy H. King
(Transcriber)

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