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Alderman, 8th District

Let's give real credit where credit is due

Statement from Alderman Bob Donovan September 14, 2015

The headline in Saturday's *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (at the top of page one) read: "Change in focus leads to 11% decrease in stolen autos."

The article details how targeted efforts by the Milwaukee Police Department last fall led to the arrests of more than 30 individuals who were prolific car thieves. And the results – after reviewing the city's online COMPASS data – have been amazing.

In 2014, during June, July and August, there were 2,627 reported auto thefts in Milwaukee, while in 2015, during the same June, July and August stretch, there were 1,886 reported auto thefts – a whopping reduction of 28%.

Additionally, during the stretch of June, July, August and September of 2014, the city had a monthly average of 839 auto thefts reported. But by October (with the arrests made), the monthly total was 302 auto thefts reported.

I want to publicly acknowledge the efforts of the Milwaukee Police Department in this endeavor, and especially the officers and prosecutors who put all of the hard work in to get the serial car thieves off the streets! This impressive work just goes to show how much of a drastic difference cops make, and how it also shows what our department can do when it sets its priorities on a certain goal, and then follows through on that goal by working closely with prosecutors.

For Milwaukee residents and neighborhoods, it also makes a huge difference in improving the quality of life, and knowing that many of the bad guys aren't out and able to steal your car in the middle of the night.

More importantly, I believe it raises an inescapable point: What if Milwaukee's police force was at full strength, with the 302 officers (2008 sworn strength) we are currently without?!

Just imagine how our department could take down drug dealers, prostitutes, burglars and other criminals ACROSS THE ENTIRE CITY if we had the full stable of officers we should have.

We know it can work with serial auto thieves, and I bet a fully staffed MPD targeting other criminals across the board (and across the city) would work just as well.

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