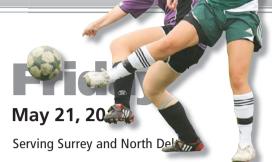




page 34





www.surreyleader.com



Bait Cars take gold in car theft crackdown

Olympic initiative results in lowest number of stolen vehicles in 14 years

Black Press

A PROMISED police crackdown against car thieves during the Winter Olympics had the desired effect, according to just-released crime statis-

During February, the number of car thefts reported to ICBC dropped 17 per cent in Surrey.

The Delta and White Rock rates, already among the lowest in Metro Vancouver, were unchanged. Those figures are based on a comparison with the same period the previous year.

Car break-ins also dropped by 20 per cent in Surrey, and 50 per cent in White Rock.

The Delta theft-from-vehicles rate, already low, was unchanged. Province-wide, there were 22 per cent fewer thefts and 15 per cent fewer break-ins, with overall numbers falling to a 14-year low.

COURTESY IMPACT

Bait Cars: Laptops left in sight

From page 1

Before the Olympics started, the provincial government announced there would be stepped-up enforcement with bait cars during the Olympics to make sure visitors to the Games didn't have their experience ruined by

vehicle theft.
The Integrated
Municipal Provincial
Auto Crime Team
(IMPACT) planted
bait cars at transit
park-and-ride lots,
Olympic training
centres and Winter

Games parking and departure hubs.

IMPACT would not comment on speculation some of the bait cars bore out-of-province licence plates to make thieves believe they were stealing visiting vehicles.

"We change our bait cars all the time," was all IMPACT spokesman Sgt. Gord Elias would say.

Some of the bait cars had cameras and laptops left out to lure thieves.

They were marked with laser-etched MicroDotDNA the

size of a grain of sand.

IMPACT computers
crunched numbers
from crime reports
to locate the bait
cars and surveillance

teams in areas where

thieves were likely to

Officers patrolled

with undercover cars

be most active.

equipped with automatic licence plate recognition technology to scan plates and locate stolen vehicles in parking lots and on the road.

"We warned car thieves that bait cars

would be everywhere

during the Games,

B.C. roads in 2004, ICBC's stolen vehicle claims have been cut from \$98 million in 2003 to \$47 million in 2009 while break-

in-related claim costs

have fallen to \$27 mil-

lion from \$17 million.

and it appears they

Solicitor General

Mike de Jong said.

got the message," B.C.

Since bait cars hit

For more information on IMPACT's Bait Car program, go to baitcar.com. For auto theft statistics and avoidance tips, visit www.icbc.com.

newsroom@surrevleader.com