



Ontario Investing to Combat Auto Theft in Essex County

Funding will help Essex County OPP maintain downward trend in vehicle theft

NEWS

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Essex County, ON - The Ontario government is investing \$200,000 through the Preventing Auto Thefts (PAT) Grant Program to support Essex County OPP in the fight against auto theft. The funding will help maintain the downward trend in stolen vehicles across the province, giving police officers more tools and resources to prevent vehicle theft, disrupt criminal networks and protect the community.

“This investment will give our local OPP officers more tools and resources to combat auto theft, protect our neighbourhoods, and keep families safe across Essex County,” said Anthony Leardi, MPP for the riding of Essex.

Through the 2026-27 PAT Grant Program, Ontario is investing an additional \$6 million to support 22 police projects across the province, bringing the government’s total investment in the program to \$24 million since 2023. The investment builds on broader provincial actions that have helped drive vehicle theft in Ontario down 36 per cent from its peak in 2023.

“Auto theft is down across Ontario because our government is making it a priority and is giving police the tools and resources they need to go after the organized criminals who are behind it,” said Solicitor General Michael Kerzner. “While we are seeing real progress, we will not let up. By investing in the Essex County OPP, we are supporting the work of local police to disrupt criminal networks, prevent auto theft and protect families in Essex County.”

“The Preventing Auto Theft Grant will enhance the ability of the Essex County OPP to address auto theft through proactive policing, specialized training and stronger partnerships. Working closely with the OPP-led Provincial Auto Theft and Towing Team and policing partners, we can better prevent, detect and investigate auto theft while improving community safety,” said Mark Loucas, Superintendent of the Essex County OPP.

“The Essex OPP Detachment Board - North is pleased that our OPP Detachment will receive support through the Province of Ontario’s Preventing Auto Theft (PAT) Grant Program. This funding represents an important investment in community safety and our collective efforts to address auto theft across Essex, Lakeshore and Tecumseh. The anticipated impact of this grant is to strengthen OPP efforts to prevent vehicle theft, increase public awareness, and support proactive initiatives that help protect residents, families and businesses. We appreciate the Province of Ontario’s investment in this initiative and look forward to seeing the positive impact that these efforts can have on community safety throughout our region,” said Paul Sweet, Chair of the Essex County OPP North Detachment Board.

“This investment strengthens the OPP’s ability to keep our community safe by providing frontline officers with the resources and training they need to respond to the challenges facing our communities today. By supporting initiatives that address automotive theft and enhance community safety, we are helping ensure residents continue to receive the high-quality policing services they deserve and the safe streets that they expect,” said Dennis Rogers, Chair of the Essex County OPP South Detachment Board.

The Preventing Auto Thefts Grant Program provides OPP-policed municipalities, municipal and First Nations police services with specialized training, additional investigative tools and resources, and public education and awareness initiatives.

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