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Economic Downturn Challenges FARA and FARA Adapts

The downturn in the US economy has resulted in many challenges for us all including restrictions on travel and the ability to make long distance calls, as well as on the time each of us is able to devote to tasks that are over and above our responsibilities at home and work. Many jurisdictions are leaving positions unfilled or are abolishing them altogether. Others are instituting mandatory unpaid days off. Some have even been forced to lay employees off. Given these dire times, it is even more important for FARA to stand strong and help our members succeed, which has a positive effect on the public safety agency, as well as on city and/or county resources.

These economic challenges have had several direct impacts on FARA.

- A change in the Presidency and other leadership positions in FARA (See related stories).
- Cancellation of the FARA 13th Annual International Training Symposium (See related story).
- Creation of the FARA Institute to seek sponsorships to ensure that FARA can continue to deliver value to members in ways that are appropriate to the changing times (See related story).
- Rescheduling of the 2009 Annual General Membership Meeting as a Teleconference (See related story).

The FARA Board is committed to making the changes required to ensure that our mission continues to be achieved. As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions on how to continue to achieve our common goals.

Thank You.

The FARA Board of Directors

Jim Cogswell Resigns

FARA President Jim Cogswell has resigned as President. Here is the email that he sent to the board earlier this month.

“I am sorry but I am going to have to resign as President of FARA. Things here are at a point where I need to devote all my time and attention to the job and home. It is nothing major, Cheryl is fine, but circumstances have forced me to make this decision.

The last eight years working with FARA has brought me many friends and people who have been and are a blessing in my life and I hope that I can return to working with you all in the future. I will not be able to be with you in Denver and will not be able to participate in any committees for the foreseeable future. Maybe later in the year or next year.

I know that this puts a burden on all of you but I know that FARA will continue to provide the knowledge and expertise that have meant so much to public safety in Canada and the USA.

Thanks for everything you all have done for FARA and for me. I will continue to try and stay in touch.

Jim Cogswell”

“Jim has been a long term board member of FARA and has made significant contributions during his term on the board and as President,” said Brad Shipp, FARA Executive Director. “Jim has always been willing to help; as an official or unofficial mentor to many, a frequent panelist at symposiums, a willing speaker at alarm association meetings throughout the country, a contributor on many FARA committees, the host of FARA’s hospitality suites, and as the creator of the FARA Regional Training Program. Jim’s contributions will be missed and I know he did not make the decision to resign lightly.”

Jim will remain a member of FARA and can be reached at jimc@leawood.org.

Natasha Pitts Steps Up to Presidency

Natasha N. Pitts of Spartanburg Public Safety Department in Spartansburg, South Carolina assumed the presidency according to the Bylaws, which state “the Vice President with the longest tenure on the board shall assume all duties of the President until the subsequent normal presidential election.”

Natasha was elected as Vice President-Fire Alarms at the 2008 Annual General Membership Meeting and will now serve as President through Jim’s unexpired term to 2010.

Natasha served as the Chair of the Conference Committee for last year’s very successful Charleston Symposium before being elected to the FARA Board.

“I am honored to serve as your President and look forward to working with the board, our committees and our members to find the most effective ways to carry out FARA’s mission,” said Natasha Pitts, FARA President. “Our challenges are real, but we have a great tradition and a strong group of dedicated board members to build on. One of the things that I seek to accomplish is expanding the number of members who are involved in FARA. We have productive committees that can do even more with the help of more members. I invite all members to contact us to see how easy it is to make a real contribution on a committee.”

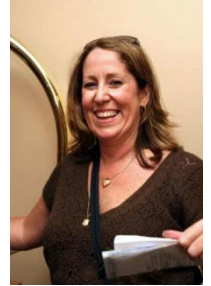


“Natasha is a strong leader with lots of energy and a proven ability to accomplish things,” said Brad Shipp, FARA Executive Director. “The success of the Charleston Symposium is proof of that. I know we all look forward to working with her and it has been impressive to watch the board, with her guidance, rally to face some difficult challenges.”

Janet Nalley Joins the FARA Board

During the January meeting, the FARA Board ratified the President’s appointment of Janet Nalley to fill the unexpired term of Gerry Miller, who became the Vice President-Electronic Security in 2008. Janet’s term on the board will expire in 2010.

Janet is the Director of the Prince George’s County Police Department, False Alarm Reduction Unit, is a long term FARA member, has served as a panelist and presenter at several symposiums and been an active member of several committees.



“I have had the pleasure to work with Janet on the Conference Committee,” said Natasha Pitts, FARA President. “I value her expertise and opinions, and I know that she will be a significant asset to the Board and members of FARA.”

2009 Denver Symposium Cancelled

It is with profound regret that the Board was forced to cancel our 2009 Annual International Training Symposium in Denver due to the horrendous economy and the inability of most of our public safety members to travel. As of our board meeting on January 21, two paid attendees had registered for the Denver Symposium. In preparation for the Board meeting, board members informally polled members to see if they were likely to be able to travel to Denver this year. Our conversations with members around the US and Canada confirmed that the travel restrictions are unlikely to be removed before the end of this year. Many indicated that travel would not be approved even if we could find a way to raise funds to pay for their travel.

Deadlines in our agreement with the host hotel escalated the cancellation penalties if we waited beyond January 25, 2009 to make a decision.

After exploring all the options we could think of, the board was forced to cancel the symposium. We all deeply regret any inconvenience this may cause any of our members. We are working as a board and with our committees to find alternative methods to get the information normally shared at a symposium out to our members.

FARA Institute Launched

The uncertainty of our economy has led many localities to restrict funding for travel resulting in our having to cancel our annual symposium. The symposiums have been the cornerstone to training our members in false alarm reduction. As you know, training is vital to any successful program and to meeting our member’s needs.

The mission of the FARA Institute is to deliver training to all of our members via a variety of means including webinars, DVD’s, publications, symposiums, classroom training, etc.

FARA is asking for contributions to provide this valuable service to our members. Every contribution helps and will be acknowledged with a thank you letter, acknowledgement in FARA's Email Newsletter (the InfoLink) and via a press release to trade press and on the FARA web site.

Please help us help you by passing on the information about the FARA Institute to anyone you feel might be in a position to help.

[Click here to download an information packet on the FARA Institute.](#)

2009 Annual Meeting Will Be a Teleconference

The FARA bylaws require that we hold an annual general membership meeting. Generally, that meeting is held at the annual symposium. Even though we will not be in Denver, we will still be having the annual general membership meeting on the date and time advertised; i.e., Wednesday, April 29, 2009 beginning at 12 noon Eastern time. Topics on the agenda include:

- Approval of minutes from the 2008 Annual meeting
- Acceptance of the Financial Report
- Consideration of Bylaw amendments
- Election of Officers and Board members
- Announcement of Annual Members of the Year Awards and Achievement Awards

The teleconference may afford many more FARA members an opportunity to attend and participate in the general membership meeting than otherwise may have been able. Further information will be sent on the meeting in subsequent issues of the FARA InfoLink.

Seats to be Elected via Acclamation at the General Membership Meeting

At the Annual General Membership Meeting teleconference on Wednesday, April 29, 2009 at 12 noon, the following seats will be elected via acclamation, since no one filed a notice of intention to contest any of the seats in the time period provided for in the FARA Bylaws:

- Vice President-Electronic Security: Gerry Miller
- Secretary: Joe Patterson
- Electronic Security Associate Director: Patricia Killian

Two additional Public Safety At-Large Director seats, as well as the Vice President-Fire Alarms, are currently vacant. President Pitts will appoint members to these seats by April 29, 2009. If you are interested in filling one of these open seats, please contact President Pitts via email at npitts@cityofspartanburg.org.

Awards Will Be Presented On the Teleconference

The False Alarm Reduction Achievement Awards, as well as the FARA Norma C. Beaubien Public Safety and W. Rex Bell Associate Member of the Year awards will be announced during the 2009 Annual General Membership Meeting on Wednesday, April 29, 2009.

Nominations for FARA Achievement Awards Needed!

Please send in your nominations for FARA's False Alarm Reduction Achievement Awards. Feel free to nominate your own agency/company or others. Both public safety and associate members can submit nominations for any category listed below. All submitted nominations will be posted on the FARA web site. We will send an email to the membership when they have been posted asking for you to cast a vote on who your favorite is in each category. The nominations should contain sufficient information to allow those voting to understand what the accomplishment is and how you were able to achieve it. You may use narrative, charts, graphs or any combination of the three. Please limit your nomination to no more than two (2) pages in length. The Achievement Awards will be presented during the Annual General Membership Meeting teleconference.

- **Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award:** This award is presented to the public safety agency that has an alarm management program, which has shown meaningful or significant reduction in the number of false alarms over a 3 to 5 year period.
- **Industry False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award:** This award is presented to an individual alarm company that has implemented and sustained an alarm management program, which has shown meaningful or significant reduction in the number of false alarms over a 3 to 5 year period.
- **FARA Achievement Award:** This award is presented to an individual, company or association that has demonstrated significant or meaningful contributions toward the FARA mission.

We know that great things are being done by public safety and alarm industry alike to combat false alarms. Tell us what you have done and let us help you get the recognition you deserve with an Achievement Award. Nominations must be submitted on or before April 1, 2009 to be considered. Please submit your nominations to FARA c/o Brad Shipp at bradshipp@4yoursolution.com or via fax at 301/519-9508.

Nominations Needed for FARA Members of the Year!

The FARA Norma C. Beaubien Public Safety and W. Rex Bell Associate Member of the Year Awards are the highest honor FARA gives to deserving individuals, who demonstrate a significant commitment and contribute the most to their department or company, the community and to FARA. Do you know anyone who fits this bill? Please tell us and let us honor them with these coveted awards. Once again, both public safety and associate members can submit nominations for either category. Past winners can be viewed at http://www.faraonline.org/html/success_stories.asp. Please submit your written nomination detailing the reasons you believe the individual nominated deserves such an award. Please limit your nomination to one (1) page or less. Nominations must be submitted on or before March 15, 2009 to be considered. Please submit your nominations to FARA c/o Brad Shipp at bradshipp@4yoursolution.com or via fax at 301/519-9508. The FARA Member of the Year Awards will be presented during the Annual General Membership Meeting on Wednesday, April 29, 2009.