



InfoLink

Information for Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Professionals

FARA InfoLink 2015 Symposium Edition

- **FARA News**
 - Annual FARA Membership Meeting
 - Awards
 - Symposium Sessions
- **General News**
 - FARA's Believe it or Not
 - News on Door to Door Sales
 - Public Safety Updates
 - Industry News
- Please Share Your Newsletters and Tips with Us
- FARA Mission Statement
- Contact Us

Thanks to Institute Sponsors!

Without the FARA Institute and our generous contributors, FARA training symposiums would not be possible. Many, many heartfelt thanks go out to all of our Institute donors as follows:

Platinum Partner
(\$5000 or more donation)

National Electronic Security Alliance (NESA)
Texas Burglar & Fire Alarm Association (TBFAA)

Gold Partner (\$3000 or more donation)

Arkansas Security Alarm Association (ASAA)

Silver Sponsor (\$1000 or more donation)

Maryland Burglar & Fire Alarm Association (MDBFAA)
Monitronics Security
Vector Security, Inc.

Annual FARA Membership Meeting

By: Shellie Reid

FARA's members came to Vegas with barely concealed excitement for the upcoming annual meeting of the membership and the meeting measured up to their expectations if they were looking for short and sweet. In a record twenty minutes, all of the required business was accomplished. This was in large part due to the uncontested positions up for elections. For those who love to exercise their electoral skills it was an extreme disappointment as no ballots needed to be cast under those circumstances. Instead, the Executive Director simply announced that the following persons would hold office for the next two years:



- Vice President of Electronic Security-Nadya Morgan
- Secretary-Shellie Reid
- Associate Director of Electronic Security-Kristina Walker

President McDonald also shared the appointments of the following committee chairs:

- Communications - Kerri McDonald and Kathleen Schraufnagel
- Membership - Debbie Hansen and Kristina Walker
- Symposium -Tammy Foxworthy and David Wilson
- Training & Certification - Sherry Couey
- Website - Shellie Reid

During the open forum, a member mentioned that the biggest issue his unit currently faces is problems with Do It Yourself systems. Despite the unit's best efforts, companies are still not registering their customers. Jon Sargent suggested that FARA create an information sheet that he would help distribute to national industry associations.

Meetings may not be something to look forward to, but the annual membership meeting does allow FARA to accomplish vital tasks. It provides an opportunity for members to see a bit of what is being done behind the scenes and gives them a chance to participate. It will be fun to see what is accomplished over the next year and presented at the next meeting.

Norma C. Beaubien Public Safety Awards for 2015

By Kathleen Schraufnagel

The Norma C. Beaubien Member of the Year Award is presented to outstanding FARA members for their contributions to FARA, their agencies and the communities they serve. The winners are selected by past winners of the member of the year awards. This year two public safety members were recognized.

Sherry Couey of Fayetteville, North Carolina

The first recipient was Sherry Couey of Fayetteville, North Carolina who was unable to attend the symposium due to family matters. FARA worked with her department to present the award and they were kind enough to provide a video of the ceremony that was shown at the Symposium.

Sherry Couey is the Alarm Ordinance Coordinator for the Fayetteville Police Department, Fayetteville, NC. She has been proactive in reaching out to her community with press releases and videos and an extensive website. Sherri has also reached out to the state licensing board and to other public safety agencies to advance the cause of false alarm Reduction.



Famous for her "southern drawl", Sherri became a Certified Alarm Manager in 2009. She joined FARA in 1999, after attending a local FARA regional training class.

Sherry has served FARA as the Training and Certification Chair and as a past member of Communications and Conference Committees. She has offered presentations at symposiums and spearheaded FARA's efforts to create PowerPoint Presentations for a variety of topics that members can use when they meet with alarm users or industry.

Roberta Smiley of Multnomah County Sheriff's Office in Oregon

Roberta Smiley was presented with the award for her work within her department and with the chapter that she worked so hard to get started. Shellie Reid tried to keep the secret until the end of the presentation, but Roberta's name slipped out during the presentation.

Roberta is the Alarm Coordinator for the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office in Portland, OR. This gives her responsibility for administering not only the county's efforts, but also the efforts of several municipalities within the county.

She help found the Oregon & SW Washington Chapter of FARA in July of 2013 and has served as its President since It was founded. She recently persuaded the FARA Board to rename the chapter as the Northwest Chapter and to expand its reach to include all of Washington State. She joined FARA in 2007 and is also a past member of Communications and Conference Committees.

Roberta became a Certified Alarm Manager in 2007 is a member of the Oregon Burglar & Fire Alarm Association and currently serves on the Alarm Industry Subcommittee of the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training.



FARA Special Awards

After the membership meeting was adjourned, the awards ceremony was held. At this time, President Kerri McDonald took time to thank the outgoing board members for their service. Debbie Hansen and Kathleen Schraufnagel were each presented with a plaque as a token of thanks for their years of service.

Kathleen shared that she has been part of FARA since the beginning and it is her favorite group of the many that she is part. She looks forward to continuing as an active participant until she retires.

Debbie mentioned that she believes that all of the blessings from volunteering have been hers to enjoy. She looks forward to many more years as a member of FARA.



FARA Achievement Awards

Before the awards ceremony began, Kerri took a moment to share how the winners of the awards are chosen. FARA allows anyone to make a nomination for themselves or others, and she encouraged everyone to participate. It is unfortunate, but FARA may not learn of accomplishments by their members unless they choose to share them.

The Public Safety Alarm Reduction Achievement Award is awarded to the alarm reduction program has shown meaningful or significant reduction in number of false of alarms over a 3 to 5 year period.

The FARA Achievement award is given to the individual or association for significant or meaningful contributions towards the FARA mission.

Thomas Waugh, City of Baltimore

The FARA Achievement Award was presented to Thomas Waugh who serves as the division chief for the special investigations unit of the Department of Housing and Community Development in the city of Baltimore.

Jason Hessler, Assistant Commissioner for Litigation and Nadya Morgan, Assistant Commissioner for Administration of the Department of Housing and Community Development in the city of Baltimore nominated Thomas for the FARA Achievement Award in "recognition of the critical difference he has made in decreasing false alarms and building partnerships around false alarm reduction in the City of Baltimore.



Part of the reason that Thomas has been so dedicated to managing Baltimore False Alarm Reduction program well is that he came to the Department of Housing and Community Development from Baltimore Police Department. In his former position as a police officer, he realized the costs of wasted police time firsthand. He has been dedicated to ensuring that false alarms are kept off the plates of already overstretched officers.”

In 2002, the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) responded to more than 125,000 alarms; 98% of those calls were false. Recognizing the enormous burden this was placing on BPD, Baltimore launched a False Alarm Reduction Program requiring alarm users to register with the city and face fines if the police were summoned for false alarms.

In December 2010, Baltimore’s Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) took over the program from a private vendor with the goal of reducing administrative costs and increasing efficiency.

The program was brought in house and added to existing registration processes. The transition was handled by a team of managers including Thomas Waugh, Division Chief for DHCD’s Special Investigations Unit. Thomas was and continues to provide oversight on this program and since that time, Thomas has dedicated himself to ensuring that the program gets the best results, not only in terms of false alarm reduction outcomes, but also in terms of quality customer service and efficient enforcement.

Thomas began by undertaking a major effort to collect better, more reliable alarm user data. When the program was first implemented, many users simply failed to submit registrations to the City, making effective enforcement nearly impossible. Thomas attacked this problem head on, building relationships with alarm companies so that better information sharing and customer engagement could be activated, and cleaning up existing datasets to more accurately reflect current user information. Thanks to his efforts, Baltimore now has over 80,358 registered alarm users, up from 25,000 at the start of the program.

Thomas also took over the enforcement for the program. The city has the capacity to issue lienable citations to users for false alarms exceeding one per year and/or for failure to register a given alarm system. In special cases, the city can cite alarm companies for infractions as well. While this capacity for enforcement helps the program get results, the intention is never to be needlessly punitive. Thomas has administered the citation program with the goal of increasing compliance while managing the burden placed on users. Thanks to his management of these citations, false alarms have dropped from nearly 53,000 in 2004 to less than 19,211 per year today. At the same time, administrative costs have dropped from over \$400,000 under the private vendor contract to below \$200,000 today.

Baltimore City False Alarm Reduction Program

The Public Safety Alarm Reduction Achievement Award was awarded to the Baltimore City False Alarm Reduction Program.

Over the last four years, the Baltimore Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has fundamentally transformed the False Alarm Reduction Program (FARP) in Baltimore City by creating a more effective and efficient process. DHCD’s inventive approach to solving fiscal and force issues has had dramatic results. After taking over the program in 2010, the Department has more than tripled the number of registered alarm users in the City. At the same time, the program has reduced the percent of false alarms to a mere 51% of all alarm calls, compared to over 90% in other jurisdictions nationally. DHCD was able to do this by integrating the program into existing operations, building relationships with alarm companies, creating an online portal for those companies, and using citations to increase enforcement.

In December 2010, DHCD’s Permits and Code Enforcement division proposed taking over the management of the False Alarm Reduction Program (FARP) for the Baltimore Police Department and integrating it into the existing property registration system. This was done under Baltimore City’s new Outcome-Based Budget Process, which strives to create a more efficient and innovative government. Previously, the alarm registration was managed by a private vendor who charged the City a significant percentage of the annual revenue. In 2010 alone, the City paid over \$400,000 to the vendor. Since taking over the FARP function, DHCD has not only eliminated this annual cost, but has also increased the City’s revenue from this service.



Much of the success of the alarm registration program relies on communication with alarm companies. While alarm companies are required by law to report their customers to the City, this was not regularly happening before Housing took over FARP. By developing productive relationships with the alarm companies through membership in the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the FARA, the Department has been able to bring companies into compliance and triple the number of alarms registered in four years.

Through conversations with the alarm companies, the department learned that they faced obstacles getting their users to register with the City. While the Baltimore City code requires all users to register their burglar alarms, the burdensome paper-based process deterred many users from registering. The lack of user registration also hurt the alarm companies, who cannot legally monitor unregistered users. To assist companies with the registration process, DHCD created an online portal that allows the companies to register customers. The portal is used to transfer customer data from the companies to the City as required by the code, while at the same time providing us with better contact information for alarm users in the City.

In addition to creating a more customer-friendly interface for alarm registrations and renewals, the Department began enforcing false alarm laws through the use of citations. Prior to DHCD's management of FARP, there were no citations issued to enforce this mandate. At that time, there was a fee to register each alarm. DHCD eliminated the registration fee, and instead began issuing citations for *failure* to register. Moreover, Department leadership sought and obtained legislation that created a penalty, enforceable by citation, for failing to pay false alarm fees. Now both unregistered alarms and unpaid false alarm fees are enforceable by a lienable citation. Additionally, citations are issued to alarm companies for monitoring unregistered users. By issuing these citations, working with alarm companies, and creating an online portal, DHCD has increased the number of registered alarms from 21,644 to 80,358 in the last four years.

Most recently, DHCD has implemented a two-call verification system, through which alarm companies help greatly reduce false alarms. Under this system, the Department believes it will be able to build on its tremendous success so far to push even further towards its goal of reducing false alarms.

Ultimately, a reduction in false alarms equals a reduction in the number of police responses. Through its successful, systemic changes to FARP, Baltimore's Department of Housing and Community Development has freed up hundreds of hours of the police force's time for other tasks. In a City with an already resource- and time-strapped police department, this is invaluable. In reducing false alarms, DHCD is creating a safer Baltimore.

Special Thanks to Tom Foxworthy

FARA owes many thanks to **Tom Foxworthy** for unselfishly volunteering his free time to man the registration desk during the entire symposium.



Opening Session

By: Amanda Garner

The FARA Symposium for 2015 was April 14th to April 16th and held in beautiful Las Vegas, Nevada. It was wonderful to see so many familiar faces and meet some new comers also!

Every year we are given a list of the symposium attendees, however this year it was listed alphabetical by the person's first name. This made it MUCH easier to find the person's information later. In the past you had to look someone up by the state they work in and then the city for a person's info.



There were many interesting classes this year but my favorite was the "Plain Language" given by Sharrid Girard. I am in the process of "cleaning up" my letters and forms to make things easier to understand.

I also want to say "Thank you" to all of the FARA Sponsors for their donations. Without these funds many of us would not be able to attend the symposium and bring back the knowledge to our departments.

I Came Here Because... What Do I Do?

By: Cindy Smith

Jim Cogswell of Leawood, KS facilitated a great exchange on a number of topics presented in a question and discussion format by the group. Below is a snapshot of the issues and discussion.



- **Q- How can I get me new ordinance approved – sitting with the city attorney?**
Discussion - work with the city council to help and be persistent.
- **Q- Should you bring your permit/false alarm program 'in house' or use a service?**
Discussion – check the ROI for both options to help determine the best alternative for your agency, if you are just getting started a service may help you develop a better product to begin.
- **Q – What is the best way to get people to pay fines?**
Discussion – placing a lien on the property if you can, place the alarm on non-response, add late fees, and non-renewal of permits, penalize the monitoring company if they continue to dispatch, bill the alarm company.
- **Q- False alarm problem with the owner out of the country?**
Discussion – require a responsible person to respond within 30 min, stop responding, and work with Alarm Company if possible to resolve the issue.
- **Q – How to get alarm users to show up and provide requested paperwork?**
Discussion – put the requirement in your ordinance, add additional fees for no shows, and issue a citation.
- **Q – How will DIY/MIY affect the false alarm issue?**
Discussion – should all be handled the same as a professionally monitored system, require the dispatchers to log these calls as alarm calls and use your existing ordinance.
- **Q – Do you allow for cancelled calls while the officer is in route?**
Discussion – many departments cancel if the officer has not yet arrived, some do not accept a cancel at all for any reason, a few had specific time requirements 3-7 minutes.

Overall a lively discussion with many good ideas exchanged!

How IQ Can Solve Your Problems

By: Nadya Morgan

This class was presented by:

- Steve Heggemann- Baltimore County Alarm Reduction Section
- Kathleen Schraufnagel - Monitronics, and
- Timothy Creenan - Amherst Alarm, Inc.

The IQ Certification Program was founded in 1997. It provides customers with a way of identifying alarm companies that are committed to excellence and is especially focused on reducing false dispatches.

As stated by the presenters:

"The program is based on a simple principle: Security and life safety systems that are properly designed, installed by trained technicians using the finest equipment, monitored correctly and operated by trained users typically function without fault, failure or false alarms for years."

IQ is a certification program and is governed by a Board that is comprised of individuals involved in the alarm industry, public safety, state regulators and insurance companies. A list of current board members was provided at the presentation and it can be found on the website www.IQCertification.org

Alarm Companies undergo a rigorous evaluation by the Board and must demonstrate that they follow the policies and guidelines for the IQ certification program to become certified. Full Service, Installing, Monitoring companies can become IQ certified.

Companies must be in compliance at the time they become certified and recertify annually. They have to show that they are committed to the program and provide reports.



How does IQ Certification benefit Customers (Alarm Users)?

1. It takes the guess work out of determining if a company is competent or not.
2. It sets the company aside from the competition.
3. It sets standards and guidelines for design and installation of systems.
4. It reduces false alarm and results in savings to the customers by requiring Users to be trained by an IQ Certified installer. It is very important to provide all users of alarm system with quality training and ensure that the customer is satisfied with the use of the system before the installer leaves.

How do alarm companies benefit from IQ?

1. When customers know that a company is certified they are more likely to choose this company over one that is not certified.
2. Customers are usually more satisfied with a company who is committed to meeting the industry standards for installation, service and training.

How is IQ good for public safety?

1. Certification of the IQ companies helps reduce false alarms.
2. IQ has a code of ethics for the IQ program. Companies have been denied and some have been removed from the program for not meeting these requirements.
3. Quality control team ensures that the companies stay in compliance with the program requirements.
4. IQ has excellent end users training guidelines.
5. To become certified by IQ companies are required to have dedicated resources.
6. Although IQ has very high standards it is a simple process with an application fee. The benefits will outweigh the cost.
7. IQ is endorsed by FARA
8. The website is geared towards its key users and public safety

Steve from Baltimore County said that he takes comments from his customers to help address issues that people are having with the alarm companies. If he is asked about referral of alarm companies, he does not exclusively recommend IQ, but he uses IQ to help guide them as they select a company. Customers can review the list and pick a company.

Kathleen gave us some background about her work with several alarm companies over 20 years and the difficulties they had with contractors meeting their requirements. They tried to set the standards for the contractors, but it did not work well. What was missing was the IQ certification.

Kathleen now works with Monitronics. They have been IQ certified for 2 years. Monitronics is now rolling out the certification requirements to their dealers. In order for alarm companies to become IQ certified, the installing company has to use an IQ certified monitoring company.

Questions:

- **Are the companies willing to become certified and will it be advantageous to them?**
Yes, the program is expanding and the certification helps the company stand out among others.
- **Is IQ available in all 50 States yet?**
www.IQCertification.org gives details on where IQ is available. If you do not see your area, just contact IQ and they will discuss how they can meet your needs.
- **From a consumer standpoint, if they pick a company who is IQ certified is cost higher to the customer?**
There is no huge financial commitment to the company to become and stay certified so there should not be any additional cost to pass on to the customers.
- **Is the IQ program tied to any laws?**
No, IQ is not tied to local program or laws. If there are licensing requirement in a particular state they need to provide that documentation. Not all licensing laws or ordinances require companies to be certified.

Overall Comments:

The training and continuing education programs are a critical component of the IQ certification program.

The rate of return on investment is high for companies. If a company follows all the guidelines they will not have to go back again and again for service. Quality encourages customers to stay with a company. Quality also keeps the false alarm rate down.

Doing it right at the beginning will reduce the cost.

There are some central stations who refuse to enforce the steps designed to limit false dispatches. The monitoring companies are the best people to keep the false alarm rate down because they know the problem before they call the police. IQ will hold the central stations to higher standards.

The IQ program has a checklist that the installer has to fill out with the User.

There is pressure on the installers to complete many systems installations in a day. "Time is Money" it takes time to get through the check list, but this is what prevents false alarms. The installer wants to get out, the users want them out and the training and system checks are not done correctly. The checklist requires the end user to sign stating that they know how to use the system. IQ brings a different level of standards to the installation process.

How can we get more information out to the customers about IQ?

- IQ has a letter that dealers can send to the local jurisdictions; just contact IQ via the website.
- Some companies feel that they could not meet IQ requirements, but have implemented some of their standards.
- The website has a list of IQ certified monitoring companies.
- If the monitoring company is certified, it does not mean that the alarm companies or installers are certified.
- Public safety can contact alarm companies and tell them about IQ.
- IQ is driven by volunteers, the speakers urged public safety to get involved in your local alarm association and bring IQ to them.

How Alarm Equipment Can Cause or Solve False Alarms

By Jim Cogswell

Joe Carr, of United Central Control, presented the Symposium with a program of the newest parts of an alarm system. While passing around different components for the class to handle, Joe told how the first alarm system was invented in 1853, and has led to today's almost magical array of devices to detect intrusions and fires in structures.

Today, the alarm industry has even eliminated the control panel many of us are used to. It is now being built into the keypad. Most all components are now wireless and can be installed by a home owner and monitored via the user's smart phone.



There is still need for a properly trained technician to know where to place sensors to provide the correct coverage. Misplaced sensors will trigger false alarms and the "monitoring" of systems by an untrained alarm user can result in more false alarms requiring public safety response.

FARA members can view different alarm system components in the FARA manual "Quick Reference for Alarm Equipment" and everyone involved in false alarm reduction should learn as much as they can about how alarm systems function.

Make Your Regs Rock

By: Tammy Foxworthy

Moderators:

- Sarah Salazar, United Central Control
- David Wilson, Public Safety Corporation

Enforcement is key.

Several topics were discussed such as:

- registration/renewal fees versus no registration/renewal fees



- who is responsible for registering alarm systems-alarm users or alarm companies
- alarm school versus no alarm school.

Agencies that don't charge a registration/renewal fee said they face road blocks from their city councils and city attorney's offices. Many city council members view a registration fee as another tax and don't want to pass it onto their constituents.

The audience was polled as to who is held responsible for registering alarm systems, the alarm users or their alarm companies. Most agencies hold the alarm user responsible for registering their alarm systems rather than the alarm companies. Although the jurisdiction holds the alarm user responsible for alarm system registration, they will take the alarm registration from the alarm company if they want to provide it.

An attendee example of this came from Richard Lucero from City of Roswell, NM. He had a situation in which an alarm user refused to register her alarm system because she was a tenant, not the property owner. Her lease agreement said her landlord was responsible for alarm registration and fines. In order to force the tenant to register her alarm system, Richard would need to change his ordinance to specifically say the alarm user is the tenant. He was successful and he was able to resolve the issue.

There were numerous agencies in attendance that offer a free alarm waiver if the alarm abuser attends alarm school. It was suggested to hold an online alarm school to save your jurisdiction money on overtime, utilities and food costs.

One of the key lessons learned was - Be sure your ordinance specifically states exactly what you need it to say in order for you to enforce it.

Are Alarms Appealing?

By: Steve Heggemann

Presenters

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • Nadya Morgan | Baltimore City Department of Housing |
| • Thomas Waugh | Baltimore City Department of Housing |
| • Derrick Jackson | Vector Security |
| • Kristina Walker | Vector Security |

The presenters immediately involved the audience with a series of questions about their appeal process. The presentation was divided into two general sections: How are Appeals Filed and Alarm Appeal Scenarios. It was evident from the beginning, that the appeal processes, like so many other aspects of a false alarm reduction program, are driven by local considerations.



Some jurisdictions charge a fee to appeal a false alarm, while others only charge a fee if the appellant takes the appeal up an additional level. Some will waive a fee if the underlying problem is corrected and some will not waive a fee without evidence of criminal activity.

Rick Moore's suggestion, to make sure that your code allows you to charge alarm companies fees for the false alarms caused by their employees, was greeted with enthusiasm by most of the attendees. The biggest reaction came when a representative from the alarm industry expressed support for "cuffing and stuffing" his mother in-law if she could not remember the code to disarm an alarm system.

Collections

By Debbie Hansen

Meredith Wivell from Frederick County, Maryland presented a very informative class on all things related to collections!

The class began with definitions of collections, responsible parties, and legal processes/ordinances. Discussion continued with the timeline process: whether or not late notifications are sent, citations issued and/or suspension of alarm response/permits.

It was interesting to learn through group discussion, who utilizes a second party to pursue collection or court processes to place a property tax lien. We were also provided with sample letters from several jurisdictions giving us great examples of verbiage we can use in creating our own delinquent notifications.



The class concluded with perspectives and discussion from the alarm industry. They provided great insight into the issues and frustrations that they work through in collecting monies owed.

In conclusion, we were given terrific directives to take back to our own departments in finding success with collections!

Thank you Meredith and FARA for another very informative class!

Plain Talk

By Elizabeth Slaughter

This session was conducted by Sharrid Girard, Customer Experience Technician from the city of Olathe KS.

This dynamic session was presented to help facilitate customer relations; through, the use of various techniques which enhance the citizens' response to our communications.

There was a lot of discussion on plain language to help citizens understand and respond without becoming confused by our word selection.

You have to know the audience and since there are a wide variety of customers, you need make communications as simple as possible for all customers to understand.



What Happens in Vegas

By: Kerri McDonald

FARA Jeopardy was back! The fabulous Rick Moore from CryWolf hosted the game for us once again.

For all the members who have not attended a symposium this is an exciting and fun way to learn and test your knowledge of FARA's documents.

The group was divided into two teams and the competition was tough. However one team prevailed and each member was awarded a FARA Jeopardy winner shirt.



ASAP to PSAP

By: Cindy Smith

Joe Carr, Co-Chair ASAP outreach Committee, Industry Relations Liaison, United Central Control and Kathleen Schraufnagel, Co-Chair ASAP outreach Committee, Industry Relations Liaison, Monitronics gave an informative overview of the Automated Secure Alarm Protocol (ASAP) to Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) program and current status of the companies and agencies involved.



What is happening today?

When an alarm monitoring operator confirms the need for a public safety response to an alarm the operator contacts the agency dispatch center via phone and gives the dispatcher the required information verbally. If the dispatch center is in a large metropolitan area or just very busy, the alarm operator will be placed on hold for 8-10 minutes causing response delays to the alarm and wasted time for the alarm operator. There are also potential problems having a verbal exchange of information when accents, lack of local knowledge and bad connections can create confusion and incorrect information being passed to the responding officer.

What is ASAP?

ASAP is an automated IP based machine to machine communication process between the monitoring centers automation provider and the public safety agency's Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. This interface eliminates the need for person to person phone calls, improving the speed and overall accuracy of the data being transferred during a request for dispatch. The system can pass the initial request, send update requests to and from the public safety agency and provide call closure with a disposition for the monitoring center. This process can improve the response time in the PSAP by 3 minutes or more.

Challenges

The major challenge is the CAD provider's willingness to work with ASAP to write the interface. There are dozens of different CAD providers and many of these companies are waiting to hear a request from the public safety agencies before they will move forward.

Another challenge is for the alarm monitoring companies, they must ensure that the alarm user data match exactly in both the CAD and the Alarm Automation system for the process to work. This will require a dedicated effort by the alarm companies to review and fix errors.

Success Stories

Richmond and York County – VA

15,000 alarm exchanges with improved processing and elimination of monitoring operator hold times improved accuracy of the data has improved the process for everyone involved. This improved the overall call handling time from over 3 minutes to an average of less than 15 seconds to process the alarm to the responding officer.

Houston, TX

15% reduction in calls handled by the dispatchers with 3 alarm companies and 43,000 monitored alarms in the program. Dozens of security monitoring companies are ready and more are getting on board all the time this program will improve the efficiency of both law enforcement dispatch centers and the industry in the coming years. More awareness is needed... see if your agency is aware and getting ready.

For more information see [CSAA](#), [APCO](#) or [Nlets](#).

Priority Response PPVAR

By Kerri McDonald

Presenters

- Chief Chris Vinson, Director of Public Safety for the Town of Highland Park
- Robbie Robinson, Detective, Phoenix Police Department

Chief Vinson started the session with an overview of what is Priority



Response. He explained the goal of Priority Response is to work with law enforcement and to encourage a policy of higher priority response for video and audio verified alarms. Chief Vinson showed us videos and gave examples of how Priority Response has assisted in apprehending criminals.

Detective Robinson followed up with some of the issues he has encountered with Priority Response. He explained most of the issues are with where and what type of environment the video equipment was installed.

Both presenters provided us with valuable information on Priority Response and how it can impact public safety.



Emerging Technologies

By Kerri McDonald

Our last day was very busy, after the first two classes we jumped into Emerging Technologies. Brad Shipp and Jordon Brown provided an overview of all the exhibits we would see at the ISC West trade show. With there being over 1,000 exhibitors at ISC this was helpful information.

After a quick wrap up we were on our way to ISC West.

The first event we attended was a public safety luncheon with members from the Nevada Security Association, California Alarm Association, Security Industry Alarm Coalition and Public Safety Agencies from the State of Nevada. The Nevada Security Association presented scholarships to two students whose parents work for public safety agencies. There were over 200 attendees which provided a great opportunity to network.

After lunch was over we moved on to the trade show. There were an overwhelming amount of exhibits to see at this event. We broke off into smaller groups with our security associate members to lead the way. You were able to see several examples of different types of equipment for burglar alarms and fire alarms, GPS tracking, outdoor perimeter protection, access control and video. We also had the opportunity to meet and network with representatives from monitoring centers, national and state associations, installing companies and equipment distributors.

This was a great opportunity for FARA's public safety members to see how big the security alarm industry really is. I would like to thank CAA Executive Director Jerry Lenander and Mary Beth Shaughnessy of Reed Exhibitions for inviting FARA to these two great events.

Thanks to Jordon Brown, Rex Adams, Craig Bober, Danna Fowble, Chris Russell, Brad Shipp and Rick Howell for doing the tours.



FARA's Believe it or Not

By: Brad Shipp

- **CA: Smoke bomb caused false fire alarm in vape store burglary**
4.21.15 - Santa Clarita Valley Signal - Burglars that looted a vape store in Stevenson Ranch a week ago detonated a smoke grenade inside the store in an effort to obscure video camera surveillance ... [More Info](#)
- **IL: Film crew's smoke machine triggers fire alarm at McHenry apartment ...**
5.13.15 - Northwest Herald - Firefighters with the McHenry Township Fire Protection District responded around 8:15 a.m. because of an activated smoke alarm at the restaurant, which is in ... [More Info](#)
- **MO: Smoke testing raises the alarm**
5.9.15 -Hannibal.net - The smoke testing of portions of the city of Hannibal's sanitary sewer system has prompted at least two calls to the Fire Department. The latest such response ... [More Info](#)
- **NM: Man drinks 10 bottles of wine, ends up locked in restaurant bathroom**
5.12.15 - WDTN - After the burglar alarm went off the owner went to investigate and says he saw a man dressed all in black inside. When officers got there they found 50-year-old ... [More Info](#)
- **NM: Police: Intruder climbs into bed with woman, her daughter**
4.28.15 - KOAT Albuquerque - When her alarm went off at 5 a.m. Sunday, Sena said there was an unexpected guest in her bed. "I sat myself up to get a better look at this person to see if I ... [More Info](#)
- **VA: Alarm Alerts Cops To Unauthorized House Party**
5.7.15 - Leesburg Today - Loudoun deputies responded just after 2 a.m. May 3 to a residential alarm. They found an allegedly intoxicated juvenile in the home. [More Info](#)

Do you have any stories you would like to share about strange, unusual, or funny reasons for false alarms? How about outlandish things that happen in the course of your usual work day? I know we all have them, so let's share and give everyone a chuckle! Please forward your stories to bradshipp@4yoursolution.com and we'll put them in the next InfoLink for all to share!

News on Door to Door Sales

Courtesy of NESA

- **Deputies warn of possible security service scam in Berkeley County**
4.25.15 - Live 5 News - "Some guy in a white, four-door car came up, parked across the street, stating that our alarm system had a low battery," said Shannon Barentine, who lives in ... [More Info](#)
- **Vivint alerts homeowners about scam artists**
4.29.15 – SSN - Vivint has a way of letting its customers know to be on the lookout for such scams. It encourages aware customers to contact the company about suspected scams or deceptive sales practices in their neighborhoods. Upon that notification, Vivint will send out an alert to alarm panels owned by customers in the impacted area. [More Info](#)
- **BBB Tips: Legitimate salesperson or scammer?**
5..15 - Jefferson City News Tribune - As soon as the weather warms up, door-to-door salespeople start knocking on doors to sell home improvements, yard work, magazines or alarm upgrades. [More Info](#)
- **BBB Warning to Consumers; What You Need to Know About Door-to ...**
5.7.15 - Sackville Tribune Post - The Better Business Bureau Serving the Atlantic Provinces is warning consumers to be extremely cautious when answering the door to traveling alarm system ... [More Info](#)
- **"Be skeptical of any offer you receive at your front door:" Take a pass ...**
5.7.15 - fox6now.com - Madison (WITI) - As warmer weather returns to our state, it also tends to bring door-to-door sales teams to our communities. Alarm systems, windows ... [More Info](#)
- **BBB warns of high-pressure alarm system sales**
5.8.15 - TheChronicleHerald.ca - The Better Business Bureau of the Atlantic Provinces is warning consumers to be cautious when answering the door to alarm system salespeople. [More Info](#)
- **Be on the lookout for travelling sales crew scams this summer**
5.8.15 - WHBL Sheboygan - "Paving and construction, people with windows, there's things as small and simple as magazines, there's certainly alarm system companies that go out and do ... [More Info](#)
- **Don't Blame Aggressive Security and Home Automation Co's. for 'Stealing' Clients**
5.14.15 - CEPro -Door knockers are out in force this summer, aggressively pursuing your clients and prospects to the tune of more than 250,000 security and home automation sales for the season. Whatcha gonna do about it? [More Info](#)
- **Police Seek Door-to-Door Security Alarm Sales Rep for Assaulting Customer**
5.16.15 - SSI - A salesperson for ASC Security USA, an authorized ADT dealer, has been accused of sexually assaulting a female customer in Bakersfield, Calif. [More Info](#)
- **Man with 'weird teeth' attempting to scam Slidell residents, police say**
5.12.15 - FOX 8 News WVUE-TV - Slidell police are warning residents of a man with "weird teeth" who is claiming to be an ADT alarm representative. Officers first received reports of the man on ... [More Info](#)
- **Take a pass on door-to-door pitch**
5.12.15 - Superior Telegram - In some cases, these agents falsely claimed that a homeowner's current alarm company was going out of business in order to convince them to sign up for ... [More Info](#)

Public Safety Updates

Courtesy of NESA

- **AZ: Council clears way for street lights, sidewalks on west end**
5.15.15 - Sierra Vista Herald - "The main changes include changing the requirement of alarm companies to obtain a city alarm business license to only obtaining a regular city business ... [More Info](#)
- **AZ: Council discusses alarm ordinance, apartment complex**
5.6.15 - Yuma Sun - At a Tuesday work session, Yuma City Council members asked for a revised ordinance on false security system alarms to consider alongside an unchanged ... [More Info](#)
- **BC: Bills are on the way in Chilliwack for nuisance alarms**
5.11.15 - Chilliwack Progress - Officials are moving ahead this summer with plans to enforce the false alarm bylaw first passed by Chilliwack council in 2011 - and they're doing it ... [More Info](#)
- **IL: Naperville Fire Department changes way it responds to ...**
5.15.15 - Chicago Daily Herald - Sending a gas-guzzling apparatus and two extra people to the scene of a malfunctioning alarm or a faulty elevator puts extra strain on the vehicles and ties up ... [More Info](#)
- **IN: New police video surveillance program launches in South Bend**
4.29.15 - ABC 57 News - For those who monitor privacy issues, surveillance cameras can raise a major alarm. Jay Stanley serves as the senior policy analyst for the American Civil ... [More Info](#)

- **LA: False alarm issue raised, neglected years ago**
5.14.15 - WWL - New Orleans - While the City Council's new get-tough false alarm proposal ... to cut done on false burglar alarms and free up overburdened police officers... [More Info](#)
- **LA: NOPD proposes crackdown on false alarm calls**
5.13.15 - NOLA.com - A proposed change to city law aims to weed out false alarm calls to the New Orleans Police Department - calls city leaders say are draining precious resources ... [More Info](#)
- **NC: Clemmons to pursue fees from false alarms**
5.13.15 - Winston-Salem Journal - Clemmons - The Village of Clemmons is taking steps to collect outstanding fees from businesses whose security alarms repeatedly go off erroneously. [More Info](#)
- **NL: False alarm security fees could add up fast, deter homeowners**
5.11.15 - CBC.ca - A new fee will be charged to homeowners and businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador next year for false alarms triggered by their security system ... [More Info](#)
- **NM: Lincoln County cracks down on alarm violators**
4.29.15 - Ruidoso News - County Planning Director Curt Temple told county commissioners at their meeting, Tuesday, the homeowners all were sent multiple letters and their alarm ... [More Info](#)
- **NV: Master fee schedule approved**
4.22.15 - Desert Dispatch - Alarm renewal/change fee of \$10. • Harvey House fees. • City's film office will implement an encroachment permit of \$85, a rider to an existing film permit at \$125 ... [More Info](#)
- **OH: City considers fines for false alarms**
5.8.15 - Bucyrus Telegraph Forum - Bucyrus - The city of Bucyrus is considering dropping its annual permit fee for burglar alarms and replacing it with fines for excessive false alarms. [More Info](#)
- **OH: City police cracking down on false alarms**
4.27.15 - Cincinnati.com - Cincinnati businesses owe the city of Cincinnati \$1.5 million in outstanding false alarm fees, and city officials say police will stop responding to the worst ... [More Info](#)
- **OH: Cleveland Heights police chief leery of recommendation to join ...**
5.12.15 - cleveland.com - Launch a comprehensive false-alarm-reduction program, including alarm registration and false-alarm fees. Freeman said this process has also begun. Develop ... [More Info](#)
- **ON: False alarm fine recommended to council**
5.17.15 - Orangeville Banner - Police are recommending a fine, or possible loss of service, for properties with more than three false alarms within a year. On Tuesday (May 12), the Orangeville ... [More Info](#)
- **TN: City doesn't pursue pet ordinance**
5.15.15 - Shelbyville Times-Gazette - An ordinance dealing with alarms in Shelbyville was also passed on second reading, deferring the effective date of Oct. 1. Changes were made to the ordinance ... [More Info](#)
- **TX: City waives alarm fees for domestic violence victims**
4.20.15 - mySanAntonio.com - Warrick filed the Council Consideration Request (CCR) on January 22, aiming to waive the \$40 permit fee that comes with the installation of an alarm ... [More Info](#)
- **WV: W. Va. county sheriff's office changing alarm response due to false ...**
4.20.15 - SecurityInfoWatch - "Last month, we had 248 alarm activations that the sheriff's office was dispatched to," Raleigh County Sheriff Steve Tanner said. "Of the 248 alarms for the month ... [More Info](#)
- **WV: W. Va. county sheriff's office changing alarm response due to false calls**
4.29.15 - Raleigh County will no longer respond to alarm calls with lights and sirens... [More Info](#)

Industry News

Courtesy of NESAs

- **Woman's sense of security diminished upon discovery that alarm ...**
4.20.15 - fox4kc.com - Kansas City, MO - An elderly woman always felt safe in her home, knowing her alarm system would sound an alert should something go wrong. That was ... [More Info](#)
- **Law enforcement association defines verified alarms**
4.22.15 - SSN - Galveston, Texas—Steve Walker, president of the Partnership for Priority Verified Alarm Response, called the Texas Police Chiefs Association's definition of the term "verified alarm" a big step for future conversations on alarm verification. [More Info](#)
- **Smart home innovations at ISC West**
4.17.15 - SecurityInfoWatch - A look at some of the products and announcements from the show floor... [More Info](#)
- **How Police Respond to Security Alarms: Why Video Verification Matters**
5.7.15 - CEPro - Law enforcement officials explain "priority response" and the importance of professional security monitoring with video verification. [More Info](#)

- **Military Family Hit With Home Security Bill, Had Tried to Cancel 2 ...**
5.7.15 - ABC News - We had the same problem -- when my husband was medically discharged from the Army, they refused to cancel our alarm contract even though we followed ...[More Info](#)
- **PE firm wants to combine Protection 1 and ASG**
5.12.15 - SSN - New York - Apollo Global Management, a \$163 billion private equity group, is in talks to acquire Protection 1 and ASG, with the goal of combining the two companies, a source close to the deal told Security Systems News. [More Info](#)
- **EMERgency24 partners with first 'RERS' provider**
5.13.15 - SSN - Des Plaines, IL - EMERgency24, partnered with BluePoint Alert Solutions, says it has a new innovative twist on rapid emergency response systems 'RERS' in its new offering: a system capable of two-way communication between people inside a building under threat and first responders. [More Info](#)
- **Tenn. Subway restaurant piloting Intruder Spray System**
5.13.15 - SecurityinfoWatch - A Subway restaurant in Knoxville, Tenn., has become the first business in America to install the Intruder Spray System. According to reports, it's a device that sits above a door and can shower a person with synthetic DNA that is traceable for up to seven weeks, far longer than most Subway diets last. [More Info](#)
- **Here's some of the crazy tech AT&T is developing behind the scenes**
5.17.15 - TechnoBuffalo - At home, Sound Safari could be programmed to recognize a range of sounds, including the doorbell, footsteps, running water, boiling water, a smoke alarm and ... [More Info](#)

Please Share Your Newsletters and Tips with Us

We would like to see how you communicate with your alarm users. Please add FARA to your mailing list if you send out Newsletters or mailings with false alarm reduction information. Do you have a brochure that describes your ordinance or program? We would like to see it. Staff will review what we receive and share tips and information with your fellow members in later issues of this newsletter.

Please send your newsletters, tips and brochures to:
False Alarm Reduction Association
10024 Vanderbilt Circle, Unit 4
Rockville, MD 20850
bradshipp@4yoursolution.com

FARA Mission Statement

It is the mission of the False Alarm Reduction Association (FARA) to provide a forum for local government alarm ordinance professionals to exchange information on successful false alarm reduction programs, to serve as a clearinghouse for agencies seeking to reduce false alarms, and to foster an environment of cooperation among public safety, the alarm industry and the alarm users.

Contact Us

False Alarm Reduction Association
10024 Vanderbilt Circle, Unit 4
Rockville, MD 20850
Email: info@faraonline.org
<http://www.faraonline.org>

Comments and suggestions regarding FARA's InfoLink are both encouraged and welcomed. If you would like to submit an article for publication, or if you have any questions or concerns about this newsletter, please contact the FARA Board of Directors at 301/519-9237, or by e-mail at: info@faraonline.org

Submitted articles in this newsletter are the expressed opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Officers and Directors of FARA.