



# InfoLink

Information for Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Professionals

## FARA InfoLink August, 2012

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## 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:

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# Waiting for You!

## FARA SYMPOSIUM 2013

*By: Letty Salamanca, Conference Committee*

It is time to mark your calendars and plan for the 2013 Orlando Symposium. If you thought that Albuquerque was great, you have yet to be dazzled!

Next year's symposium will take place in Orlando, Florida, which will offer an optimal educational opportunity in a setting that provides great weather, food and don't forget those exciting family activities (I'm going to Disneyworld!!).

The Conference Committee is working hard on next year's symposium to offer an even greater learning experience.

Prepare yourself to obtain an incredible amount of knowledge about false alarm issues, the industry and what your peers are doing. Each class is well thought out to provide a deeper understanding of the issues that are most prominent in the world of alarm management. Our classes are geared for all, ranging from novices to expert members. The symposium in Orlando will provide a chance to grow professionally through our classes and the various networking opportunities provided throughout the week. The FARA symposium can go beyond a professional experience, so bring the family along and make your time in Orlando a family affair!

FARA understands that some jurisdictions may not have the funds to send some of you to the symposium, so the Conference Committee staff is working diligently in obtaining donations to the FARA Institute to sponsor those in need of tuition assistance. So why not plan to attend? Why not join us in Orlando? Orlando will give you the chance to make long lasting relationships on both a professional and personal level.

It is not too early to start planning for next the 2013 Orlando Symposium. So mark your calendars in advance and prepare to soak up some knowledge in the sun with FARA in Florida. We have officially started the countdown for Orlando 2013! More updates will be shared in the coming months including which classes are being planned.

You are part of FARA—Join us!



## News from the Membership Committee

*By: Debbie Hansen, Membership Committee Chair*

It's that time of year!! Dues are due! Don't lose all out on all of the advantages of FARA membership by allowing those dues to go unpaid!

Please contact anyone on the membership committee if you have any questions.



## Training and Certification Committee Report

*By: Sherry Couey, Fayetteville Police, NC, T&C Committee Chair*

The Training and Certification Committee met under its new Chair, Sherry Couey. Among the topics of discussion was the inclusion of newly developed FARA documents in the C.A.M. Exam objectives.

The Committee also decided to start featuring the C.A.M. Spotlight on the FARA Facebook page. Yes! CAM's are going global via social media! (With those individual's permission of course!) The first CAM featured on FARA's Facebook page was Duff Astin of Sandy City, UT.

### CAM Spotlight – Jim Cogswell

*By: Sherry Couey, Fayetteville Police, NC, T&C Committee Chair*

This month's featured C.A.M. spotlight is Jim Cogswell of Leawood, KS.

#### **What is your current Position?**

My title is Special Services Officer with the Leawood Kansas Police Department. Besides running the False Alarm Reduction Program for Leawood Police and Fire, I also administer the video archives and handle court security.

#### **What are your hobbies and interests?**

My wife, Cheryl, and I ballroom dance 2-3 nights a week and I play guitar and collect music and books.



#### **How long have you been a member of FARA and do you participate in any FARA committees or activities?**

I joined FARA in 2000 and have participated in most of the committees at one time or another. I served as Vice-President for six years and President for 10 months. I currently help with the Certification and Training Committee.

#### **When you did you first obtain your certification?**

I first became certified in 2001 as one of the first group who took the exam.

#### **What made you decide to take the exam?**

It was the challenge to try and achieve a professional rating.

#### **What type of response did you receive from your employers, the alarm industry or members of the community about your achievement?**

I think that the local alarm industry was the most appreciative of the designation and realized that it allowed me to better understand their problems and to work with them to solve our mutual problems with alarm abusers.

#### **Do you think accomplishing your certification has benefited your career or position as an alarm manager/coordinator? Has it made a difference in what you do?**

I think it has benefited our program as we have been able to reduce our false alarms by half over the last few years and now have 85% of our alarm users without false alarms during the year. It has also enabled me to help other communities in this area that want to begin a false alarm reduction effort.

#### **Do you think others could benefit from achieving their Certification status?**

Definitely! The more knowledge you have on all the possible ways we can reduce false alarms, the better you are able to do your job and benefit your community.

#### **Where is your certificate now? (Displayed on wall? Hidden in a drawer?)**

It is displayed on my office wall.

## Featured Resource – Reduce Commercial False Alarms Bulletin

By Brad Shipp, FARA

Commercial alarms account for virtually half of the total false alarms responded to by public safety agencies. False alarms cost business owners and the public millions of dollars in wasted money and resources. The impact of false alarms can be minimized by following a few simple steps outlined in this bulletin.

The full list of FARA other presentations and publications can be accessed on our [web site](#). Copies can be downloaded from the member's only site.



## FARA's Believe it or Not

By: Lisa Espinosa, Newsletter Editor

### Sweet-Toothed Bear Bandit Caught Snacking On Surveillance Tape In Estes Park, CO

8.8.12 - *Examiner.com* - Estes Park Colorado is known for ample wildlife and close encounters of the elk kind but Tuesday August 7, the owner of Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory learned a different species in Estes Park has a sweet tooth for chocolate, a very polite black bear.

Upon opening the shop the store owner Jo Adams saw a little dirt on her counter and a few empty wrappers on the ground. Her first thought was that a ground squirrel had managed to sneak in during the day and had helped himself to some chocolate and sweet treats. She and her son decided to check out their surveillance video and were surprised to see instead a black bear chocolate bandit.



Everyone in the Hundred Acre Wood knows that bears, especially Pooh Bear loves honey, but chocolate? The Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory owner reported that the bears favorite treats were the chocolate covered rice crispy treats, peanut butter cups, balls of joy, english toffee, giant chocolate covered cookies called "Cookie Bears."

The bear got in because of a faulty door latch visiting seven times, each time choosing a few of his favorite treats, walking outside to eat on the sidewalk and returning a few minutes later. This polite bear didn't want to make a mess inside the cute chocolate shop it seems. You can see in the video below how polite and careful this hungry bear is as he hops along the countertops and explores without disturbing a thing. You can even see him hold the door open with his foot and then wander in.

[You can see the chocolate loving black bear break in video here.](#)

After Adams and her family spent two hours of cleaning up, disinfecting and throwing away all the candy that the bear could have possibly touched, the chocolate shop was once again open for business.

Jo Adams wants everyone to know that she doesn't want any action taken against the bear. He is not a problem bear she says: "He was just doing what bears do... eat!"

The Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory has been enjoying extra sales ever since with people coming into the shop and wanting to purchase the same treats the bear enjoyed on his chocolate bear crime spree.

Estes Park Colorado locals love and appreciate the abundant nature and wildlife and do their best to co-exist peacefully with it. If you are moving to Colorado or visiting for a vacation please take the time to read about bear encounters, what to do if you happen upon a bear and how to avoid attracting bears to your home, office or campsites.

Do you have any stories you would like to share about stupid criminals or 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 [lespinosa@beavertonoregon.gov](mailto:lespinosa@beavertonoregon.gov) and we'll put them in the next InfoLink for all to share!



## Joke of the Month

A police officer pulls a guy over for speeding and has the following exchange:

**Officer:** May I see your driver's license?

**Driver:** I don't have one. I had it suspended when I got my 5th DUI.

**Officer:** May I see the owner's card for this vehicle?

**Driver:** It's not my car. I stole it.

**Officer:** The car is stolen?

**Driver:** That's right. But come to think of it, I think I saw the owner's card in the glove box when I was putting my gun in there.

**Officer:** There's a gun in the glove box?

**Driver:** Yes sir. That's where I put it after I shot and killed the woman who owns this car and stuffed her in the trunk.

**Officer:** There's a BODY in the TRUNK?!?!?

**Driver:** Yes, sir.

Hearing this, the officer immediately called his captain. The car was quickly surrounded by police and the captain approached the driver to handle the tense situation:

**Captain:** Sir, can I see your license?

**Driver:** Sure. Here it is. It was valid.

**Captain:** Who's car is this? **Driver:** It's mine, officer. Here's the owner' card. The driver owned the car.

**Captain:** Could you slowly open your glove box so I can see if there's a gun in it?

**Driver:** Yes, sir, but there's no gun in it. Sure enough, there was nothing in the glove box.

**Captain:** Would you mind opening your trunk? I was told you said there's a body in it.

**Driver:** No problem. The trunk is opened; no body.

**Captain:** I don't understand it. The officer who stopped you said you told him you didn't have a license, stole the car, had a gun in the glovebox and that there was a dead body in the trunk.

**Driver:** Yeah, I'll bet the liar told you I was speeding, too!

Do you have any great jokes to share? Please send them to [lespinosa@beavertonoregon.gov](mailto:lespinosa@beavertonoregon.gov)

## Job Opening in Montgomery County, Maryland

*By: Norma Beaubien, Director, False Alarm Reduction Section*

The False Alarm Reduction Section of the Montgomery County Police Department is seeking a qualified individual to fill their Program Manager II position, which is being vacated due to the retirement of incumbent Director Norma Beaubien.

The employee will be responsible for planning, directing, coordinating, evaluating and implementing a comprehensive law enforcement program to reduce false burglar alarms. This includes the development and implementation of policies and procedures relating to enforcement of Chapter 3A, Alarms, of the Montgomery County Code and Executive Regulation 12-02AM, Policies, Procedures and Fees for Alarm Businesses and Alarm Users; evaluation of the effectiveness of the law and regulation and coordinating amendments; establishing goals and objectives and ensuring those are met; develop, implement and manage new initiatives to reduce false alarms; oversee the generation, collection and deposit of all monies collected through the program; coordinate and manage all aspects of a custom software program to implement the program including assessing the effectiveness of the technology used, conducting ongoing system review to establish long range improvement plans and administering the contract with a software vendor; investigation and research of law violations and issuance of civil citations, including preparing cases and testifying in court as necessary; supervision of professional and clerical level employees; preparation and publication of an annual report; serve as subject matter expert representing the Police Department on all matters related to false alarm prevention; and other related duties as assigned. This employee will be required to attend certification classes for security alarm technicians, as well as become proficient enough in the position to become a Certified Alarm Manager through the False Alarm Reduction Association.

This position is open to interested and qualified individuals both inside and outside county government. The salary range, required experience and preferred criteria are listed in the job posting. If you are interested in applying for the position, please follow the instructions below. **The job closes on August 28, 2012**, so if you are interested in applying, please do not delay. If you know of anyone who might be interested, please feel free to forward this notice to them.

### Instructions to Access Job Advertisement/Apply for Position:

1. Log onto [montgomerycountymd.gov](http://montgomerycountymd.gov)
2. Select "Departments" and then "Human Resources"
3. Within that page, select "Careers" and then "Search Jobs" (The "Search Jobs" link appears in blue type in the middle of the page.)
4. That takes you to the "Home" page where you can register. You will have to register with Montgomery County in

order to submit a resume.

5. If you just want to look at the job ad, click on the "Search Jobs" tab. Under the Job Category listings, select "General Professional." The job list will appear at the bottom of the screen.
6. The Program Manager II job is number IRC9280. Click on the job number and the specifics of the position will appear.
7. The entire application process is handled on-line - no paper copies are accepted.
8. Please be sure that you give specific information covering all of the preferred criteria.

Thank you for your interest!

## News on Door to Door Sales

*Courtesy of NESAs*

- **FL: From sleazy contractors to bedbugs: Homeowner scams on the rise**  
8.6.12 - NBCNews.com - A 95-year-old Florida woman was convinced to sign a 5-year alarm system ... The Hillsborough County Consumer Protection Agency intervened; the alarm ... [More Info](#)
- **FL: Security solicitors rile up residents in Palm Bay, Melbourne**  
7.25.12 - Florida Today - Palm Bay, FL - Tim Taylor, 22, said an aggressive salesman from Vivint home security alarms confronted him in his garage.... [More Info](#)
- **GA: Marietta police warn of alarm scam**  
8.7.12 - WSB Radio - Marietta, GA - When a young man wearing a black t-shirt and khakis knocked on her door and asked to see her security system panel, Marietta resident Claudette Redmond, ... [More Info](#)
- **HI: Rise in door-to-door scams prompts warning from Honolulu police**  
8.16.12 - KHON2 - Honolulu, HI - "With the alarm companies often what it is not so much a theft or fraud thing often ... "If there is an alarm or a violation they will call the police and respond to it, ... [More Info](#)
- **MN: Door To Door Sale Warning**  
8.10.12 - KAALtv.com - Rochester, MN - Custom Alarm of Rochester claims dozens of its customers have complained someone is misrepresenting the company while trying to sell new security systems. [More Info](#)
- **MO: New reports of questionable sales tactics from alarm companies**  
8.1.12 - KMOV.com - St Louis, MO - He told her that teens were burglarizing homes in the neighborhood and cutting phone lines to disable alarm systems. Castellano had a sign in her yard, ... [More Info](#)
- **PA: Beware of Door to Door Sales**  
7.30.12 - Patch.com - Lower Southhampton, PA - The Bucks County Office of Consumer Protection warns county residents after a Levittown letter writer encounters an alarm system salesperson. [More Info](#)
- **PA: Trouble Shooter: Door-to-door salesman raises alarms**  
7.22.12 - phillyBurbs.com - Bucks County, PA - Q. A salesman come to my door at 8 p.m. Friday selling alarm systems. Knowing I was a senior citizen, he played on my fear of living alone. He talked me into ... [More Info](#)
- **TN: BBB warns against Pinnacle Security tactics**  
7.28.12 - The Tennessean - Spring Hill, TN - ... and Spring Hill said Pinnacle door-to-door sales representatives used misleading, intimidating and high-pressure tactics to sell alarm systems and monitoring. [More Info](#)
- **UT: Vivint takes door-knocking rival to court**  
8.8.12 - Security Systems News - Provo, UT - Vivint is suing another door-knocking company, alleging it has been using false and misleading statements to steal Vivint customers. Who's the rival and what's the legal showdown all about? [More Info](#)
- **VA: Door-to-door scam operations on the rise**  
8.14.12 - NBCNews.com - Virginia's Department of Criminal Justice Services recently warned people about door-to-door salespeople selling alarm monitoring. The department's Lisa ... [More Info](#)

## Public Safety Updates

*Courtesy of NESAs*

- **AK: Fairbanks City Council revises rules for false fire alarm fees**  
8.7.12 - Fairbanks Daily News-Miner - Fairbanks, AK - The previous fee schedule allowed up to four false alarms per month but charged \$500 for five to 10 false alarms per month and \$1000 for more than 10 per ... [More Info](#)
- **AR: City Council: Mayor asks -- Cut your grass, move abandoned ...**  
8.14.12 - Magnoliareporter - Magnolia, AR - Police responded to 83 burglary or other automated alarms. ... Police will answer every burglary alarm, but, "I'm asking very nicely for people to look ... [More Info](#)

- **AZ: Alarm permits in Pinal top 15000 for first time**  
7.18.12 - TriValley Central - Pinal, AZ - Call it a by-product from being one of the fastest growing counties in America, the number of homes and business with alarm permits in Pinal County has grown ... [More Info](#)
- **CA: False alarms decrease with alarm permit program**  
7.25.12 - Lincoln News Messenger - Lincoln, CA - Since false burglar alarms from homes and businesses have a way of taking the focus of police from proactive policing and crimes in progress, an alarm permit ... [More Info](#)
- **CA: Sacramento council poised to hike fines for false alarms**  
7.31.12 - Sacramento Bee - But fines would kick in with the third: \$120 for residences and double that for commercial buildings. For a fourth false call, the fines would rise to \$150 and \$300; ... [More Info](#)
- **CT: Stamford passes smoke alarm ordinance**  
8.13.12 - Stamford Advocate - Stamford, CT- Here are the new regulations: Every residential dwelling must have an operating smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector as of December ... [More Info](#)
- **FL: Lake Wales Burglary victim now wants to help police**  
7.29.12 - News Chief - Lake Wales, FL - When Bryne asked if a resident would need to register a security system with police, Black said it reduces the chance of officers going to false alarms or getting ... [More Info](#)
- **HI: Alarm systems that 'cry wolf' may get costlier for owners**  
8.3.12 - Thegardenisland.com - Lihu'e, HI - If the Kaua'i County Council approves a recommendation from its Public Safety Committee, it may get a bit costlier to have a home or residential alarm ... [More Info](#)
- **HI: Public safety meetings continue**  
7.17.12 - Thegardenisland.com - Koloa, HI - Rapozo said a council bill would charge residents after two incidents where a residential home alarm system generates a false alarm. He said it costs money ... [More Info](#)
- **IL: Illinois fire district barred from monitoring fire alarms**  
8.14.12 - SecurityInfoWatch - Lisle, IL - A federal court last week issued a modified permanent injunction against the Lisle-Woodridge Fire Protection District in Illinois, barring the district from ... [More Info](#)
- **IL: KenCom to stop alarm monitoring service**  
7.24.12 - Joliet Herald News - Joliet, IL,- Beginning Aug. 1, KenCom will cease monitoring alarm systems for homes and businesses in Kendall County. The KenCom board has decided that it would no ... [More Info](#)
- **IL: PSAP problems in Illinois raise safety concerns**  
7.25.12 - SSN - Arlington Heights, IL - A PSAP that controls emergency communications for numerous municipalities around Chicago is having problems. Industry insiders say this is why they're involved in an ongoing battle in Illinois to prevent municipalities from monopolizing fire alarm monitoring. Find out the latest. [More Info](#)
- **IN: "King of Castle" law cited as reason to not investigate burglary alarm**  
7.25.12 - Fox 59 - Noblesville, IN - Noblesville homeowner William Davis had just left home Sunday afternoon when his burglar alarm went off. The front door was ajar. But when Noblesville police ... [More Info](#)
- **IN: Gary council takes two ordinance proposals off the table**  
7.18.12 - Post-Tribune - Gary, IN - ... will regulate the installation and use of automatic and manual alarm systems; and one that will regulate "cash for gold," scrap and pawn businesses in the city. [More Info](#)
- **KS: False alarms costly for Wichita**  
7.24.12 - KWCH - Wichita, KS - If you have an alarm system, then you may know what its like to deal with a false alarm. Wichita police do too. In fact officers respond to more false alarms than ... [More Info](#)
- **LA: Alexandria residents must register alarm systems**  
7.28.12 - Alexandria Town Talk - Alexandria, LA - Alexandria residents who have homes or businesses with alarm systems have to register with the Alexandria Police Department, according to a release, ... [More Info](#)
- **NM: Public hearing scheduled for Las Cruces alarm ordinance**  
8.7.12 - Las Cruces Sun-News - Las Cruces, NM - A public hearing on proposed changes to the city's residential and commercial alarm ordinance will be at 5:30 p.m. Thursday at City Hall, 700 ... [More Info](#)
- **NY: City Hires Outside Firm to Collect Alarm Fines**  
8.13.12 - Patch.com - Long Beach, NY - The City of Long Beach is the first municipality on Long Island to hire an outside firm to collect fines that are levied for false alarms. The City Council voted Aug. [More Info](#)
- **NY: Company to collect Long Beach false alarm fines**  
8.10.12 - Newsday - Long Beach, NY - Long Beach, seeking to drive down false burglar alarms and save on personnel costs, has hired a Texas company to collect the fines the city levies for false [More Info](#)
- **NY: Nyack Lawmakers: Stiffer Fines for False Alarms**  
7.23.12 - Patch.com - Nyack, NY - Individuals, businesses who make more than two false alarm calls to fire department will pay higher fines. [More Info](#)
- **OH: Warren to fine for false alarms**  
7.25.12 - WFMJ - Warren, OH - We've all heard about the boy who cried wolf. Well, that story is becoming something of a problem for Warren city police officers. So far this ... [More Info](#)

- **OR: Corvallis raises fee for false alarms**  
7.18.12 - Corvallis Gazette Times - Corvallis, OR - The Corvallis Police Department last year responded to 467 activated security alarms in city businesses and residences. Of those, only five were alarms that ... [More Info](#)
- **PA: City mulls fire regionalization**  
8.15.12 - Standard Speaker - Hazleton, PA - Adjusting false alarm fees to more accurately reflect costs and impacts. n Implementing a sick-leave monitoring program and a performance management ... [More Info](#)
- **PA: Reading (Pa.) Hires Contractor to Manage False Alarms**  
7.25.12 - Security Sales & Integration - Reading, PA - To reduce the amount of time it spends answering false alarm calls, the Reading Police Department (RPD) has contracted with a private company to administer a new alarm management program. [More Info](#)
- **PA: Reading, Pa. to enforce alarm ordinance**  
8.7.12 - Security Info Watch - Reading, PA - City looks to reduce the amount of time police spend on false calls [More Info](#)
- **SD: False alarms may spur fee**  
7.16.12 - Sioux Falls Argus Leader - Sioux Falls, SD - Of the nearly 2000 alarm activations at residences and businesses last year in Sioux Falls, only 18 were valid. A proposed city ordinance amendment is aimed at ... [More Info](#)
- **TN: Council passes fire alarm ordinance: Panel must give final approval ...**  
8.8.12 - Jackson Sun - Jackson, TN - On first reading, the Jackson City Council passed a new false alarm ordinance, which would require fire and security alarm users to sign up for a permit and ... [More Info](#)
- **TX: New city officer to add new elements to force**  
7.18.12 - Madisonville Meteor - Madisonville, TX - If we get an alarm and there is an obvious sign that someone has been in that place, we can send him in instead of an officer. If God forbid that person has a gun, ... [More Info](#)

## Industry News

*Courtesy of NESAs*

- **Lowe's launches home automation/home security service**  
7.19.12 - Security Systems News - Mooreville, NC - Company's Iris offering comes in kits and can be installed by the homeowner. Lowe's, the world's second-largest home-improvement retailer, announced today it has launched Iris, its new home automation/home security service. [More Info](#)
- **How Reliable Is Your Alarm Communicator?**  
7.23.12 - SDM - With more and more residential accounts foregoing a traditional phone line in favor of cellular or VoIP, security dealers increasingly are installing alarm ... [More Info](#)
- **Lowe's Iris: Boon or bane in fight against false alarms?**  
8.8.12 - Security Systems News - On one hand, it's hard not to see the appeal of Lowe's new Iris home management system. It's do-it-yourself for those with the dexterity to install a thermostat, it's cloud-based so homeowners can control and check on their properties remotely, and it's inexpensive: starter kits range from \$179 to \$299, and there are no monthly fees for those who choose to do their own alarm monitoring. [More Info](#)
- **AT&T makes it official: 2G service will end**  
8.7.12 - Security Info Watch - 'Sunset' of 2G impacts security industry due to extremely high number of accounts that use 2G alarm panel communicators... [More Info](#)
- **Devcon to Shut Down Texas Operations, Cut 197 Jobs**  
8.7.12 - Devcon Security plans to shut down its 23,000-square-foot facility here next month, nearly 18 months after opening the operations center, reports the Dallas Business Journal. [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](mailto: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

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