FARA InfoLink
Information for Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Professionals

Special Annual Training Symposium Issue

May, 2005

In this issue:

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9th Annual FARA Conference Held

The False Alarm Reduction Association held its 9th Annual International Training Symposium in Miami, Florida from May 2 through May 6, 2005. This training symposium marked the highest ever attendance, as well as the most diverse array of classes FARA has ever held, and it was a huge success. Built-in networking time proved to be invaluable, with many questions asked and answered outside of a regular structured learning environment. We were also very fortunate to have members of the Alarm Association of Florida participate on some of our panels and provide instruction on how alarm systems

operate. Every attendee was encouraged to take the contact information of at least one new colleague home with him or her and to continue to build the wonderful relationships that were developed in Miami.

If you were unable to attend the training symposium this year, read through this special edition of the InfoLink to find out what you missed and then use this information to help you gain approval to attend next year's training symposium in San Francisco, California from April 24 through April 28, 2006! We will be staying at the Hyatt at Fisherman's Wharf and the Conference Committee has already started planning the training courses and events to be held.

Don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity to learn more about false alarm management and how you can assist your department and community in dealing with this issue.

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Thanks!

The FARA Board of Directors extends a huge thank you to all of our sponsors, who so generously contributed to the success of the FARA Training Symposium:

- ADT – Lunch
- AOT Public Safety Corp. – Breaks
- Alarm Association of Florida – Lunch
- Alarm & Electronics – Breaks
- Aressco Electronic Security Services – Breaks
- Brinks Home Security – Membership and Awards Lunch
- Central Alarm Control – Breaks
- Dade County PBA – Breaks
- Guardian International, Inc. – Lunch
- Hispanic Police Officers Association – Breaks
- Network Multi-Family Security Corporation – Board Lunches
- Perry Ellis – General Sponsor
- Purvis Gray Technology Group – Breaks
- Security Industry Alarm Coalition (SIAC) – Grants

A very special thank you to Betty Lou Bell, who so graciously donates so much of her time to FARA year after year. Her willingness to staff the FARA registration table, sell FARA memorabilia and provide assistance to our attendees is second to none and greatly appreciated by all.

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Opening Session and Keynote

The training symposium opened this year with a keynote speech from the Miami-Dade Police Department's Assistant Director of Support Services J. D. Patterson. Director

Patterson shared stories with us about his days in patrol, responding to what turned out to be false alarms, as well as his interest in and support of false alarm reduction programs that assist both individual patrol officers and law enforcement departments as a whole to better utilize their resources. He helped to validate that what we do is important work and should be recognized as such. In attendance at the keynote along with Director Patterson were Chief Oscar Vigoa, Centralized Services Division, who, in part, oversees the Miami-Dade Police Department's False Alarm Enforcement Unit, Commander Frank Vecin and Captain Carlos Vazquez of the Intergovernmental Bureau. We know how busy they all are and greatly appreciate them taking the time to welcome us to Miami and give us their insights to the false alarm problem.

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FARA Feud

The FARA Conference Committee constantly looks for ways to provide innovative and exciting training to its members. FARA Feud spawned from the understanding that training should include at least two things; i.e., it should be interactive and should be fun to promote learning. "Richard Mooreson" (aka Rick Moore of AOT Public Safety Corp. and past Treasurer of FARA), once again served as Master of Ceremonies and hosted a rousing game of FARA Feud, which served to teach attendees about alarm management issues in a fun atmosphere. The interactive nature of FARA Feud also helps to develop camaraderie among teammates and provides a forum for all attendees to get to know each other a little better. FARA Feud was deemed a success and may be back next year – although unnamed sources close to the Conference Committee said that we may see a return of "Alexia Trebecia" or even "Janna White!"

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Specialized Training

The annual FARA Training Symposium is designed to provide sessions and interactive discussion panels, which will give alarm management professionals the tools they need to develop, implement and maintain successful false alarm reduction programs. At the Miami training symposium, FARA members were exposed to a wide variety of topics and training formats; everything from understanding how alarm systems work to managing personnel to causes of and solutions to false alarms. Following is a synopsis of the training presented in Miami.

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How to Cope with Emergencies and Disasters – Lessons Learned from the 2004 Hurricane Season

The State of Florida was hit with an unprecedented four (4) hurricanes in very short succession in 2004. With the devastation caused by those hurricanes, public safety agencies were overwhelmed in their attempts to provide public safety to their citizens. How that affected alarm units throughout the state, as well as how alarm and monitoring companies provided service to their customers, was the topic this panel explored. The panel, moderated by FARA Executive Director Brad Shipp, included Stan Hanson, Palm Bay, Florida Police Department, John Moorhouse, City of Gainesville and Alachua County, Florida Police Departments, Sgt. Patty Bimonte, Miami-Dade Police Department, Jim Cogswell, Leawood, Kansas Police Department, and Russ Jones, Central Alarm Control, Florida.

We learned about how various local, state and federal agencies worked together to provide essentials. We also learned about the criteria set by alarm unit managers and their departments for suspending the imposition of fees and fines during the catastrophe; i.e., when and what services were suspended and when they could be restored. Finally, we learned about how alarm companies were able to assist the community, sometimes when they were wiped out themselves, in trying to bring normalcy back to the affected regions. Panelist Cogswell shared his experiences in dealing with ice storms and tornadoes in the mid-West, to give a better understanding that regardless of where we are located within North America, we all have the potential to have severe weather events that will affect the way we do business.

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Effective Alarm Unit Annual Reports

Many alarm coordinators and their staff struggle with how to effectively portray their successes and to depict what those successes mean to the overall operation of their departments. This session covered why an annual report is a good thing and how to effectively use information to best represent how your unit

has reduced false alarms. The session detailed what statistics could be included to provide the most impact, as well as covered sections on revenue, expenditures, savings, major accomplishments, new initiatives and public relations.

Instructors Norma Beaubien, Montgomery County Police Department and Jim Cogswell, Leawood Police Department shared examples of several different types of annual reports, which ranged from extensive with narrative, graphs and charts, to one-page summary documents and everything in between. The key point to this training was that while writing annual reports can be a pain, they are worth it in the end, because they give you an opportunity to showcase what you have done all year and provides a mechanism to get your unit in front of command staff, which you might not otherwise have the opportunity to do.

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Working with Alarm Companies

Alarm units across the nation have discovered that by developing good working relationships with their local alarm companies and alarm associations they are better able to reduce false alarms. Likewise, many in the alarm industry have also found that working relationships with public safety agencies have led to successful programs to reduce false alarms.

The purpose of this panel was to showcase one area in the country where both "sides" worked successfully toward a common goal – the reduction of false alarms. Law enforcement panelists Sgt. Patty Bimonte, Miami-Dade Police Department and John Moorhouse, City of Gainesville and Alachua County Police Departments, shared their experiences in starting up alarm units and how meetings with the alarm industry were contentious at first, but that they moved toward amicable working relationships, which fostered implementation of programs to reduce false alarms. In fact, both Patty and John are members of the Alarm Association of Florida (AAF) and serve on the board of directors.

Panelists Roy Pollack, Guardian International, Inc. and President of the AAF, Bob Neely, AAF Executive Director and Bob Ireland, Amsafe Security shared their experiences in helping to develop an atmosphere where both public safety and the alarm industry could work in concert to attack the false alarm problem.

Moderator Norma Beaubien, Montgomery County Police

Department, asked probing questions of all panelists, who discussed the types of communication and information that would be useful to each, as well as the preferred method of obtaining that information. Additionally, the panelists described how to open the lines of communication where none had yet been established, as well as how to re-open the lines of communication when they broke down for whatever reason.

Bob summed up the panel very eloquently when he said, "It's not "us" against "them," it's "us" (alarm industry and law enforcement collectively) against the alarm abuser."

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How to Select Alarm Management Software

One of the most critical aspects of a successful alarm management program is the ability to track alarm users and their alarm usage and the ability to bill for excessive false alarms. However, most public safety false alarm reduction professionals do not initially have the expertise to make informed decisions about what they need in terms of automation or what false alarm tracking and billing software can do for them. This panel, comprised of Joe Patterson, Greenville County Sheriff's Office, South Carolina; Stan Hanson, Palm Bay Police Department, Florida; Annmarie Reno, Lee County Sheriff, Florida; Carol Puckett, Carol Puckett Consulting, North Carolina; Norma Beaubien, Montgomery County Police Department, Maryland; and moderated by Kathleen Schraufnagel, Brink's Home Security, delved into key aspects of selecting alarm management software. The panelists were chosen because of the diverse nature of their particular applications; i.e., own outright vs. lease, custom vs. off-the-shelf, in-house vs. outsource, etc.

Attendees learned about the differences, as well as pros and cons for each application in terms of cost, ease of customization, maintenance and support. While some panelists felt cost was the deciding factor in which product was purchased, others felt that the ability to bring the system on line quickly with relatively little disruption to operations was key. All agreed that an electronic interface with the department's E-9-1-1 system was an essential element in a good program, as it negated the need for double data-entry, which is time consuming and provides another level at which human error comes into play. Another issue the panelists tackled was the subject of data conversion and how to best accomplish that task. After this panel discussion was complete, attendees had a much better idea of the questions to ask when deciding on an alarm management software package.

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How to Sell your Alarm Management Program

Generally, command staff comes to you and says the department is experiencing a problem with false alarms. They now want you to "fix" it. The problem is, you have no idea what the issues are, how to go about "fixing" the problem, and do not know who to contact. Veteran

public safety alarm unit coordinators Jim Cogswell, Leawood Police Department, W. Rex Bell, Huntsville Police Department and Gerry Miller, Peel Regional Police, staffed this panel discussion moderated by Stan Hanson, Palm Bay Police Department, which explored the various ways in which we can sell our alarm management program to command staff, legislators, the alarm industry and citizens.

The unique challenges and obstacles each faced in starting alarm management programs in their own communities were discussed. Each also described ways in which they were effective in building support from all affected parties and how that support was enhanced over time. Cultivating good working relationships with local alarm companies and alarm associations was cited as a key aspect in promoting alarm management programs.

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How to Set Up and Run an Alarm School

Alarm Unit coordinators across the country have met with great success in their educational efforts by holding Alarm User Awareness Schools. For the most part, the

recidivism rate among those, who attend these classes, is incredibly high, and those alarm users no longer pose problems for public safety agencies or their alarm companies.

Instructor John Moorhouse, City of Gainesville and the Alachua County Police Department, provided comprehensive information on not only how to be successful in getting citizens to attend, but also in what type of information should be covered and who should be involved in the training class. Glynda Saavedra, John's "right-hand" person, assisted in the development of this course and helped us understand how to best prepare for a class, how to advertise, understanding different class structures depending on the audience, time limits on classes, and evaluations. Attendees also learned that most, if not all, successful Alarm User Awareness Schools use a team-teaching approach with both public safety and alarm industry instructors. Public safety instructors can provide information on the costs and effect of false alarms public safety and the public at large, while alarm industry instructors help students understand how alarm systems work and

what causes false alarms. Both instructors give students substantive ways in which to avoid and prevent false alarms. Attendance at alarm school can be either voluntary or mandatory, and may provide incentives, such as the waiver of one false alarm fine.

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How Alarms Work

Bob Worthy, Treasurer of AAF and owner of Secur Technologies of Coral Springs, FL, gave a power point presentation, supplemented continuously with hands on demonstrations of how alarm equipment works. As he explained the major components of alarm systems, he highlighted recent changes in equipment design and programming that are designed to reduce false alarms.

Bob also stressed the importance of hands-on training for alarm users and empathized that users should only contract with trained and properly licensed contractors. He described the process of an alarm from its origination, thru the control panel, as it communicated to the central station, as verification calls are made and finally as a dispatch request is relayed to the public safety. A memorable part of this session was the demonstration of the durability of alarm equipment, when Bob submerged a door contact under water without generating an alarm and then removed the magnet from the switch to generate an alarm as designed.

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Managing Personnel

Whether in public safety or the alarm industry, we all have issues managing personnel, who work with or for us. It can often be a daunting task, especially getting the best performance out of individuals of diverse backgrounds, ethical standards, personalities and age groups.

Just as some people are visual learners while others are literal learners, each individual on your staff may respond to a different type of direction. It is your responsibility as a supervisor to learn how to motivate and mentor all of the different personalities with which you deal.

Captain Leonard Hoffman of the Miami-Dade Police Department, Personnel Management Bureau, walked us through the public safety hiring process and discussed how important job descriptions and structured interviews can be. He also discussed specific questions that

can and cannot be asked to better determine if you are getting the right person for the right job.

Instructor Gerry Miller, Peel Regional Police, Brampton, Ontario, Canada, discussed in great detail the role of the supervisor as a coach, role model and mentor. She stressed that those qualities will assist a good supervisor to get the best work product in the best work environment possible. She also described the process for developing and implementing key items which supervisors must prepare, including a performance appraisal plan, as well as the periodic and annual written evaluations or appraisals.

Finally, we learned about the general differences between the "Generation X" and "Baby Boomer" generations and how each group has its own unique dynamics, motivations, ethics and values. Understanding that these are simply differences and not necessarily negative attributes can go a long way toward fostering an office environment that displays harmony, mutual respect and joint effort.

Alarm Unit Best Practices – Success Stories

In this panel discussion, moderated by FARA Executive Director Brad Shipp, we learned about some unique and innovative initiatives implemented by alarm coordinators to reduce false alarms and gain greater compliance with local alarm ordinances. Stan Hanson, Palm Bay Police Department, found that the number of alarm users, who had delinquent fees and fines owed, was rising. In an effort to effect a change in alarm user behavior, Stan scoured his City Code for anything that might help him collect those delinquencies. In the

Occupational Licensing section, he found a provision that allows for the suspension or revocation of an Occupational License, which allows a business to operate in the city, for failure to abide by all laws in the City of Palm Bay. Armed with this information, Stan was able to collect thousands of dollars in outstanding and delinquent fees and fines by taking action against the alarm user's Occupational License. Stan has also succeeded in raising the visibility of his unit and in calling attention to the false alarm problem by submitting several articles to local newspapers.

W. Rex Bell, Huntsville Police Department, is uniquely qualified to inspect alarm systems and determine whether they were installed correctly, as he is a former alarm company owner and has installed thousands of alarm systems himself. He found one alarm user in his city that had excessive false alarms. He met with the owner, inspected the alarm

system, and determined that the system was old and antiquated, and that Rex himself had installed the system for the current owner's father many years prior. Rex required the owner to replace the system, and he no longer has false alarms from that location. Rex also appeared on monthly television programs to discuss false alarms and how to avoid them. Rex consistently meets with Problem users and maintains a strong working relationship with alarm companies and associations in his area.

Jim Cogswell, Leawood Police Department, developed a fantastic working relationship with a municipal court judge, who would hear cases dealing with violations of his city's alarm ordinance. The Leawood ordinance allows for Jim to write citations to alarm users, who fail to appear at alarm school when required to do so. When those alarm users come before this judge, she "throws the book at them" imposing daily fines for each day that has passed since the alarm user missed the mandatory alarm school class. After the alarm user is duly chastised, she advises that she will waive the fine if the alarm user attends the next class. For Jim, the goal is getting alarm users into alarm school where they can learn how to avoid false alarms. As such, this is an extremely effective tool at his disposal. Jim also maintains a strong relationship with local dealers and associations.

Tom Durnan, Hempstead Police Department, found that false fire alarms were on the rise. Sending fire trucks to what turns out to be a false alarm is even more costly to public safety than sending a police car to a false burglar alarm. Additionally, the potential for harm to the population at large is increased due to the "lights and siren" response. Tom instituted a policy whereby they attempt to verify residential fire alarm activations prior to sending a truck. Tom reported that this has reduced false fire alarms considerably in the City of Hempstead.

These are but four examples of different ways that alarm coordinators have been successful in attacking specific false alarm related issues in their communities. All panelists agreed that using the news media was advantageous and that every opportunity that arises to get the issue to the community should be used; i.e., talk shows, local cable stations/shows and internet sites to name a few.

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False Alarm Causes and Solutions

Ron Walters, Coordinated Alarm Reduction Effort (CARE) Manager, Security Industry Alarm Coalition (SIAC), presented a wonderful workshop detailing false alarm causes and three major solutions initiated by the alarm industry in recent years. Ron spoke about SIAC and the CARE program and how they are ready, willing and able to assist local public safety enact effective alarm management ordinances.

Enhanced Call Verification (ECV) was instituted by the alarm industry as a voluntary standard in October 2004. Alarm dealers observing ECV make a second call to a responsible party's phone number upon activation of an alarm system. Over the past six months, many national, large regional and local alarm companies have voluntarily instituted ECV, which has had led to an immediate reduction of requests for dispatch going into public safety 9-1-1

centers.

Another initiative developed by the Security Industry Association (SIA), which represents alarm equipment manufacturers, deals with the manufacture of alarm control panels that meet rigid false alarm prevention protocols. The CP-01 Standard incorporates certain programming defaults that have proven to reduce the likelihood that alarm users will cause false alarms. Alarm industry statistics show that when CP-01 compliant equipment is installed for problem alarm users, it has shown a reduction in dispatches by up to 75%.

The final solution Ron discussed was addressing individually the chronic problem alarm abusers. Look at your "terrible ten" or "top one hundred" and focus on why they are having false alarms; is it because of cleaning crews or domestic help, is it opening/closing errors, is it a training issue? Involve all parties in this solution – the alarm user, the alarm company and public safety staff. Generally, you are able to correct the problem once you have identified the causes.

Vendor Show and Exposition

The FARA Board of Directors would like to extend a very special thank you to our Vendor Show and Exposition participants: Alarm Association of Florida, AOT Public Safety Corp., CTS America, Enable Point and Purvis Gray Technology Group.

All of the vendors were given an opportunity to speak to the entire group about their particular service and/or product. With the exception of the Alarm Association of Florida, all

during the training symposium, is a key element in successful alarm management programs.

Members spent time at each booth talking with vendors and observing first-hand what each software program could provide.

The Alarm Association of Florida provided us with copies of their newsletter, The Handshake, and spoke with members about their efforts to reduce false alarms in Florida.

We thank all of our vendors, who so generously provided information on their specific products or services, which are designed to reduce false alarms or assist in the management and billing of false alarms.

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Professional Certification Program

FARA's one-of-a-kind Professional Certification Exam was given again at this year's training symposium. Attainment of the "Certified Alarm Manager" status, through successful completion of the exam, signifies a proficient and significant level of expertise in the management, coordination, preparation and implementation of a false alarm reduction program.

Sgt. Patty Bimonte, Miami-Dade Police Department and Annmarie Reno, Lee County Sheriff's Office in Fort Myers, Florida joined the ranks of those professionals, who have achieved the "Certified Alarm Manager" designation by successfully completing the FARA Certified False Alarm Reduction Professional Exam. Congratulations to our newest members of this elite club!

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FARA Awards

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FARA Member of the Year Award

The FARA Member of the Year Award was presented to Sgt. Patty Bimonte, Alarm Coordinator of the Miami-Dade Police Department, False Alarm Enforcement Unit and FARA Treasurer for her immeasurable contributions to both FARA and the Miami-Dade community. Patty was honored, first and foremost, for the incredibly outstanding job she has done as FARA's Treasurer. When Patty joined FARA four years ago, she hit the ground running and hasn't stopped. She believes in FARA and its mission and always strives to go that extra mile for both the association and her department. Patty is relentless in her quest to always get FARA and all its members the most and very best for its money and constantly looks at the big picture to ensure that FARA stays solvent. Her bookkeeping is second to none and has allowed the Board to see where we have been, where we are now, and where we are going in the future, which gives the leadership a better handle on what can and cannot be done. Patty researched and

implemented new banking options, when she felt that we were not making the most efficient use of FARA's funds, and she was able to cut costs with no negative impact on the association.

Patty was truly remarkable in her efforts to host FARA's 2005 Annual International Training Symposium. She worked many long, hard hours on securing everything we needed in Miami to be successful; everything from wireless microphones to guayaveras to keynote speeches by command staff – nothing was impossible for Patty! She was also instrumental in seeking and receiving donations for Silent Auction items, as well as sponsorships for FARA events during the week-long training symposium. She very quickly and capably handled any problems that arose with accommodations or food and we thank her for a superb job!

Patty also just took over the responsibility for managing the False Alarm Enforcement Unit for the Miami-Dade Police Department, which has seen a substantial reduction in false alarms over the past couple years. She is diligently working to bring a new false alarm tracking and billing computer software system on line at the same time the department is bringing a new CAD system on line. Patty has taught herself to work within the spirit of the law instead of always within the letter of law to effect change in alarm user behavior and make the streets of Miami-Dade safer for it citizens and police officers.

Commenting on her award, FARA President Norma Beaubien said, "Patty truly deserves many more accolades than I can possibly give for her selfless dedication to FARA, as well as to her community. Patty certainly exemplifies the qualities, which make her the perfect person to receive the FARA Member of the Year Award, and I am honored to present this award, which she so richly deserves."

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FARA Associate Member of the Year Award

The FARA Associate Member of the Year Award was presented to Pat Killian of Vector Security, Inc. for her fabulous contributions to both FARA and the false alarm issue over the past year. Pat has been active in FARA for several years and has been an incredible asset to both the Communications and Quality Commitment Committees on which she serves. She authored several false alarm prevention bulletins on behalf of FARA, and provided invaluable input and suggestions on fourteen others. She diligently reviewed all of the publications that were up for review and revision under the FARA's triennial review process and served as co-lead on revisions to the Proactive Alarm Industry Customer Service manual. She also provided excellent suggestions to help FARA's Gold Star Award Program come to fruition, which has morphed into a joint FARA/SIAC endeavor called the PDQ Award Program.

As Central Station Manager of Vector Security's Richmond facility, Pat is meticulous in her quest to ensure that all Vector Security dispatch requests are made according to the various laws of the numerous jurisdictions in which they have customers. She goes above and beyond in monitoring dispatch rates to ensure they are the lowest possible, and contacts problem accounts to ensure those problems are dealt with and corrected. She is always available to help public safety agencies with problems, and we know that only one call to Pat will result in a quick resolution. Pat even instituted a training program for national accounts to educate them on the false alarm issue, how to avoid and/or prevent

false alarms, and their negative impact on public safety. "Pat truly embodies the FARA mission in the cooperative, outstanding working relationships she has built with the public safety community. I am incredibly grateful to her for everything she has done to help promote FARA and to make it a better association for us all," said FARA President Norma Beaubien.. "We are truly fortunate to have such a caring, committed alarm industry professional in our midst, and one who is infinitely deserving of the Associate Member of the Year Award."

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False Alarm Reduction Achievement Awards

Three awards were given this year to deserving recipients, which seek to recognize law enforcement and alarm industry initiatives that have shown meaningful or significant reduction in the number of false alarms over a three to five year period or which embody the FARA mission. Attendees at the training symposium were given all of the nominations for each category of award and asked to vote on the ones they found most deserving. FARA will continue to bestow these awards on an annual basis and will have symposium attendees select the winners. If you have or know of a program that you would like to nominate for next year, please forward your written nomination to FARA's Executive Director Brad Shipp at bradshipp@4yoursolution.com.

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Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award

The Public Safety False Alarm Achievement Award was presented to the Palm Bay Police Department for its exceptional efforts and success in reducing false burglar and fire alarms. Under the direction of Alarm Administrator Stan Hanson, the City of Palm Bay alarm management program resulted in a 56% decrease in the number of false alarm dispatches since October 2004. This remarkable reduction is further evidenced by the astonishingly low dispatch rates for residential (.21%), commercial (.89%) and combined (.29%) alarm users in calendar year 2004. Stan attributes the Palm Bay Police Department's success to implementation of new and innovative ideas to deal with all issues surrounding false alarms, as well as to the considerable support he receives from his direct supervisors, command staff and from FARA.

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Industry False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award

The Alarm Industry False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award was presented to Guardian International, Inc., of Hollywood, Florida, for their voluntary implementation of Enhanced Call Verification (ECV) and the huge impact it has had on the reduction of false dispatches in Miami-Dade County. ECV is a process by which Guardian International first calls the alarm site, and if no contact is made, then at least one additional phone call is made to another responsible party's phone number in an attempt to verify the validity of the alarm signal before requesting police dispatch. Guardian International was
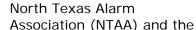
nominated by Sgt. Patty Bimonte of the Miami-Dade Police Department, where false dispatches have dropped approximately 40% since Guardian's implementation of ECV. In her nomination, Patty stated, "Guardian International is a strong advocate for the reduction of false dispatches and their dedication to the industry and public safety should not go unrecognized."

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FARA Achievement Award

The FARA Achievement Award was presented to the North Texas Alarm Association (NTAA) and the Texas Burglar and Fire Alarm Association (TBFAA) for their unwavering support and sponsorship of FARA's new regional training program.

The NTAA became aware of FARA's training program and made a request that we select Dallas as the site of our first training course, since they felt there was a great need to help promote effective false alarm reduction programs, as well as foster an environment of cooperation and good working relationships between public safety and the alarm industry in Texas. The NTAA Board of Directors voted to sponsor one-half of the entire training costs for public safety personnel.

The TBFAA Board of Directors agreed with NTAA in the usefulness of the course and the promotion of developing better working relationships between public safety and the alarm industry and voted to sponsor the remaining one-half of the entire training costs. The net result was that FARA was able to partner with the NTAA and the TBFAA in presenting our course to any public safety personnel, as well as to any member of the NTAA or TBFAA. The outcome was phenomenal, with great representation and participation by public safety and the alarm industry, which never would have happened without the wonderfully generous support of the two alarm associations. In her nomination, Norma Beaubien, President of FARA stated, "Both NTAA and TBFAA went way 'above and beyond' in their efforts to help foster the cooperative environment that FARA's mission statement embodies, and for that reason, believe that they are both incredibly worthy of this award."

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General Membership Meeting

The 9th annual General Membership Meeting took place on Thursday, May 5, 2005. Chief Oscar Vigoa of the Miami-Dade Police Department gave an inspiring speech on the professionalism of FARA members and their importance to public safety, and especially patrol officers. He urged all in attendance to become further involved in their association and to take on leadership roles. Chief Vigoa touted the wonderful educational opportunity FARA provides in its annual training symposium, as well as in its written publications and web site. FARA thanks Chief Vigoa for taking time out of his busy day to provide the membership with insight from a command level.

FARA President Norma Beaubien presented the membership with the 2004-2005 Annual Report, where she highlighted numerous FARA accomplishments from the past year, including but not limited to the successful implementation of the Regional Training Program, creation of additional false alarm reduction bulletins, development of new Universal Alarm User Registration/Permit Form guide, revisions to several FARA publications, alarm industry outreach initiatives, member accolades and joint programs with several state and local alarm associations. (To review a copy of the full annual report, please visit the web site, www.faraonline.org, under the "About Us" section.)

Members were asked for input on the initiatives included in the draft 2005-2006 Strategic Plan. President Beaubien appointed Committee Chairs, but asked for volunteers to replace the current Board members, who serve as committee chairs. She also urged everyone, regardless of how long they had been in the alarm management field, to get involved and provide input on committees.

Running unopposed, four individuals were elected to the Board by acclamation, including 1st Vice President Jim Cogswell, Secretary John Moorhouse, At-Large Director Amy Lobdell and Associate Director Kathleen Schraufnagel. Member Stan Hanson received a nomination from the floor to serve as an At-Large Director, and he was elected to that position unanimously.

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Board of Directors Meetings

The FARA Board of Directors held its bi-annual meeting to kick off the training symposium on Monday, May 2, 2005. The Board reviewed and approved the 2005 budget and received a report from FARA Treasurer Patty Bimonte that the association is doing extremely well financially. Discussion was held on the training symposium attendance, fees, sponsorship and vendor show and exposition. There was also detailed discussion on increasing the membership and how that might be accomplished, the new NBFAA Industry Affairs Committee sub-committee (Industry Issues), which will work with FARA on revision of the model burglar and model fire alarm ordinances, ECV's effects on the reduction of false alarms, and the apparent misuse of panic alarms by alarm users. At-Large Director Gerry Miller reported that CANASA is excited about working with FARA to provide the venue for a regional training course in Toronto in October 2005.

Highlights of the final Board of Directors meeting on May 6, 2005 included discussion of:

- the Miami training symposium,
- membership goals,
- FARA leadership and the need to get more people involved,
- Louisiana Burglar and Fire Alarm Association invitation to host a booth at their public safety day event in August,
- SIAC grants and the process for obtaining grants through FARA,
- Possibility of a new AOT Public Safety grant,
- Reciprocal members, and
- Renewal membership.

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Extras!

Casino Night at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino was deemed a huge success by all those who participated. Coupled with Cinco de Mayo celebrations occurring at Seminole Paradise adjacent to the casino, we were able to participate in the carnival-like atmosphere, imbibe in our favorite potent potables and enjoy the music and sights. Fun was had by all!

The Silent Auction was a fantastic success this year! With all the wonderful items donated by members, the special minimum bid theme baskets, and signed sports memorabilia, there was certainly something for everyone to enjoy! Bidding was fast and furious right until the end. FARA earned approximately $900, which will be used to benefit the membership through written publications and further training opportunities. FARA thanks everyone, who so

generously donated items to this incredibly successful fundraising endeavor.

AOT Public Safety Corp. very generously raffled off a free copy of their Cry Wolf software program. Pasco County Sheriff's Office representative Rob Gartenberg was thrilled to have won such a worthwhile prize!

In an excellent display of an effective public/private partnership, the Miami-Dade Police Department joined with

Security One Systems to provide an exhibit in their Crime Prevention Vehicle to teach citizens how to better protect themselves. The Crime Prevention Vehicle, which is a converted bus, contains extensive information on crime prevention measures that citizens can take and includes an extensive integrated security equipment demonstration. The bus visits shopping malls, schools, commercial businesses and crime prevention groups throughout Miami and even visited the FARA training symposium on May 5. Attendees were able to tour the Crime Prevention Vehicle and see how Security One Systems displayed a truly integrated alarm system with networking, access control, alarm system and CCTV capabilities.

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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

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FARA Mission Statement

It is the mission of the False Alarm Reduction Association (FARA) to provide a forum for local government alarm ordinance managers 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 law enforcement, the alarm industry and the alarm users.

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Contact Us

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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.