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## FARA 2008 Awards

### Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award

- Winner - Spartanburg Public Safety Department, Spartanburg, South Carolina
- Honorable Mention -
  - Leawood Police Department, Leawood, Kansas
  - Loudoun County Sheriff's Office, Loudoun County, Virginia

### Industry False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award:

- Winner - Priority One Security, Greenville, South Carolina
- Honorable Mention -
  - Custom Alarm/Communications, Inc., Rochester, Minnesota
  - Diebold, Inc., Honolulu, Hawaii
  - Sonitrol Security Services, Ontario, Canada
  - Vintage Security, LLC, Jessup, Maryland

### False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award:

- Winner - South Carolina Alarm Association
- Honorable Mention -
  - California Alarm Association

**Detail descriptions for each award follow**

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### Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award

**Description:** Alarm reduction program has shown meaningful or significant reduction in number of false of alarms over a 3 to 5 year period.

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### Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award Winner Spartanburg Public Safety Department

**Nominated by:** Natasha Pitts

**Rationale:** In early 2005, I was assigned to establish a program to monitor the false alarms occurring in the City of Spartanburg. The purpose of the Ordinance is to encourage alarm users and alarm businesses to maintain operational reliability and proper use of alarm systems and to reduce false alarm dispatch

requests and, thereby, prevent the misuse of police and fire resources. This Ordinance governs systems intended to summon police and fire response, requires permits, establishes fees, provides for penalties for violations, establishes a system of administration, and sets conditions for suspension or loss of permits.

The Ordinance requires all residences and businesses within the City of Spartanburg to register their working burglar and fire alarm systems with the Spartanburg Public Safety Department (SPSD). There is an annual registration fee of \$10.00. As I began to receive registrations, the addresses were put into a database in the current dispatch system, where I was able to follow the alarm activity. I began by sending weekly press releases as well utilizing other media outlets such as the news stations and Safety Scene. This had an immediate impact on the registration process. We even began receiving registrations from alarm users that live in the county, and they do not have to register. Effective June 1, 2005, I began enforcing the Alarm Ordinance which states that more than two (2) false alarms in a calendar year is a violation and cost WILL incur. This of course was an ongoing process but it did have a positive effect. The reduction of false alarms began.

**False Alarm Ordinance Information for the City of Spartanburg**

- The City of Spartanburg has had a False Alarm Ordinance as of November 2004
- In the City of Spartanburg, all alarm systems, monitored or not, must be registered with Alarm Coordinator
- Further, the alarm permit must be renewed annually
- The permit fee to register an alarm system in Spartanburg is \$10.00
- The penalty fee schedule for false alarms in the City of Spartanburg is as follows:

1st	false dispatch free	6th	false dispatch \$100.00
2nd	false dispatch free	7th	false dispatch \$100.00
3rd	false dispatch \$50.00	8th	false dispatch \$200.00
4th	false dispatch \$50.00	9th	false dispatch \$200.00
5th	false dispatch \$50.00	10th	false dispatch and above \$500.00

There is an additional charge for each false dispatch for failure to register your alarm system of \$500.00.

- The City of Spartanburg Alarm Coordinator is responsible for billing.
- The alarm data source is CAD (computer automated Dispatch)
- Suspend/Restrict Police response (revoke permit) Yes
- How many until response suspended? 10
- Accept cancellations? Yes
- Require verification? No, require attempt
- Response priority? High

\*Suspended Police response enforced since December 2007.

**Evaluation of the last three years:**

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
<b>Number of Permits</b>	<b>2,060</b>	<b>2,357</b>	<b>2,689</b>
<b>Responses</b>	<b>5,038</b>	<b>4,488</b>	<b>2,686</b>
<b>Dispatch Rate</b>	<b>3.22</b>	<b>2.44</b>	<b>1.59</b>

As the graph below depicts, false alarms to which public safety were required to respond were reduced over the previous years. These statistics, coupled with new registered alarm users over the same period, clearly shows that substantial false alarm reduction is still being achieved and that the alarm ordinance is an excellent tool in reducing false alarm and positively changing alarm user and alarm business behavior.

**Spartanburg Public Safety – False Alarm Reduction**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Requests for Dispatch</b>	<b>Actual Responses</b>	<b>No Response</b>	<b>Verified Calls</b>
2003	9,007	6,975	*	*
2004	7,538	5,852	*	*
2005	6,650	5,038	1,647	475
2006	5,757	4,488	1,298	425
2007	4,278	2,686	745	855

\*Does not include no response or verified calls, from base for 2003-2004, as statistics for those months are not available.

An impressive result of the alarm management program has been the huge savings in number of hours and work years of police officer time. The following chart, entitled Cumulative Savings, depicts revenue, hours and work years saved as a result of the program.

**Spartanburg Public Safety – Cumulative Savings**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Revenue Saved</b>	<b>Hours Saved</b>	<b>Work Years Saved</b>
2003	-	-	-
2004	-	-	-
2005	\$ 198,150	4,008	3.13
2006	\$ 167,000	3,579	2.79
2007	\$ 101,370	2,995	2.08
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$316,220</b>	<b>10,582</b>	<b>8.00</b>

\*Does not include revenue saved, hours saved or work years saved for 2003-2004, as statistics for those months are not available.

Each year, more and more alarm users have no false alarms. Since the inception of the False Alarm Reduction Unit, 70% of our alarm users had no false alarms. This statistic, which is supported by the low false dispatch rate, measures the success of the program. In 2007 alone, the FARU saved \$101,370 in patrol costs, which equates to 2,995 hours and 2.08 actual work years.

In addition to enforcing the mandates of City of Spartanburg’s alarm ordinance, FARU staff also engage in additional false alarm reduction initiatives, which includes the “major offender project” which identifies those alarm users who are experiencing problems and meeting with them and their alarm companies to help identify the exact cause of the problem and to suggest solutions. This has been a highly effective program for the FARU and has been incorporated into our annual goals and objectives plan.

Some of the major accomplishments of our False Alarm Reduction Unit are:

- The FARU along with FARA developed and published new flyers and new brochures designed to assist alarm users reduce the incidence of false alarms and educate them regarding the provisions

of the alarm law.

- The FARU implemented a No Response policy in December of 2007. This policy was created for alarm users who fail to pay false alarm response fines after being summons and notified numerous times that these invoices are due. The FARU started with 19 accounts and we currently have 5 accounts on No Response.
- The Alarm Coordinator has met with numerous major businesses in the city who had amassed a significant number of false alarms. FARU staff worked with these retailers to obtain payment of false alarm response fees totaling \$22,210. More importantly, however, FARU staff worked with the retailers and their alarm companies to identify the causes of the false alarms and to suggest methods that could be employed to reduce or eliminate the need for police and/or fire to respond unnecessarily. Through these efforts, all three businesses have become responsible, aware alarm users that no longer have a false alarm problem.

The False Alarm Reduction Unit of the Spartanburg Public Safety Department would like to be considered for the FARA Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award in part for the reduction from 6,975 responses in 2003 to 2,686 in 2007. I truly feel that the initiatives which we have taken, have had a tremendous impact on our Police and Fire Response to false alarms and to future policies where by alarm users and alarm companies in our city will have more accountability. This is an uphill battle, but we are off to a great start one alarm user at a time.

***“Policing in Partnership, Preservation Through Prevention.”***

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## **Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award Honorable Mention Leawood Police Department**

**Nominated by:** Jim Cogswell

**Rationale:** I would like to nominate the City of Leawood's False Alarm Reduction Program for the FARA Achievement Award. Since the program has been in effect since 1995, our false alarm ratio has continued to decline. The growth in alarm users has been 34% over the years while last year's false alarm ratio was .391. And last year we had seven 24 hour periods where no Leawood police officers or firefighters had to respond to an alarm.

Last year we had the lowest number of alarm dispatch requests since 1983. This has been achieved through the combined efforts of the City Council, the Kansas City Burglar and Fire Alarm Association, alarm users and police and fire personnel. And we are currently running below last year's numbers.

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## **Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award Honorable Mention Loudoun County Sheriff's Office**

**Nominated by:** Sally Shaffer, Alarm Administrator

**Rationale:** The False Alarm Reduction Unit of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office would like to be considered for the FARA Public Safety False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award. As a relatively new unit

in the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office, the False Alarm Reduction Unit has achieved a significant reduction in false alarm responses, since inception of the false alarm ordinance in March 2005.

During the past few years, Loudoun County has seen a population explosion (13.86% growth). Needless to say, this growth in population and building has brought in an increased number of alarm security systems attributing to an increase in alarm responses. This increased population, plus patrolling the County's 517 square miles, put a strain on the counties law enforcement.

To combat this rise in population and building growth, two studies were conducted in 2004 to ascertain the best route to take to reduce false alarms. One study provided statistics for verified response and the second study evaluated the traditional ordinance approach. In March 2005, the County Board of Supervisors passed the False Alarm Ordinance and established the False Alarm Reduction Unit in the Sheriff's Office to administer the Ordinance and program. The alarm ordinance requires all alarm systems (residential and commercial) be registered with the Sheriff's Office

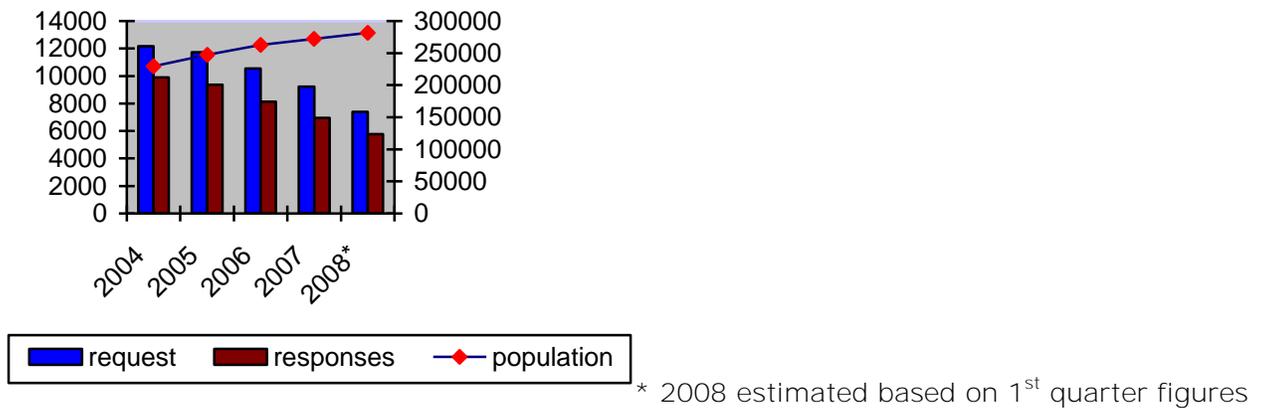
During the implementation process:

- Media coverage was used to inform citizens of the expected date of enforcement.
- Courtesy letters were sent to all users experiencing false alarms along with a brochure that outlined the program, fine structure and false alarm prevention tips.
- Contacts were established with alarm/monitoring companies
- Registered for over 20,000 alarm users in the tracking/billing database

A significant drop in false alarm request for dispatch and responses was noted after adoption of the Ordinance and again after enforcement began. The graph below shows the steady rise in population and the dramatic decrease in alarm dispatch requests and actual responses.

### POPULATION VS ALARMS COMPARRISON

(Calendar year)



The ordinance imposed a fine on alarm users that have three or more false alarms in a calendar year. The third false alarm is invoiced at \$100 and increases with each false alarm thereafter. If an alarm user fails to pay the accessed false alarm fine after 60 days, the site is placed in no-response status. Since inception the alarm unit has achieved a 94.02% collection rate.

There are three incorporated towns located within Loudoun County that are exempt from the county's ordinance. Recently, the Town of Middleburg rescinded their alarm ordinance and adopted the Loudoun County False Alarm Ordinance giving the Sheriff's Office authorization to administer their ordinance. This

means the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office False Alarm Unit will now be billing and tracking the alarms that occur within the Town of Middleburg as well as those that occur within Loudoun County.

In summary, developing, enacting, and implementing a successful false alarm reduction program is not easy. However, the rewards are remarkable and certainly make the pain of start-up worthwhile. False alarm reduction benefits all aspects of the communities; alarm users and alarm companies become more aware of their alarm usage; and alarm signals carry greater weight when signals are not automatically considered false.

As a new reduction unit the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office False Alarm Reduction Unit has seen a 40% reduction in false alarm dispatches and responses since 2004 even though the population in Loudoun County continues to increase. To further enhance the program the False Alarm Reduction Unit has:

- Developed a web-page to include
    - Question & answers about the program
    - Fine structure
    - Tips on reducing false alarms
    - On-line registration
  - Problems are addressed in a timely manner
  - Contacts are established and an open-communication is encouraged.
  - Process and track alarms from other jurisdictions
  - Achieved a report with citizens, business owners and the alarm industry
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## **Industry False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award:**

**Description:** Alarm reduction program has shown meaningful or significant reduction in number of false of alarms over a 3 to 5 year period.

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## **Industry False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award Winner Priority One Security**

**Nominated by:** Joe Patterson

**Rationale:** The Industry False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award was presented to **Priority One Security** of Greenville, South Carolina, in part, for creation of their exceptional Customer Service Department, which consistently goes beyond normal expectations to solve and correct problems that arise. Priority One assists public safety on a daily basis in reducing false alarms. In that vein, they participated in a meeting with Community Deputies to explain how alarm systems operate and provided basic hands on training. They work diligently to reduce their company false alarm dispatch rate, always abide by the mandates of the local alarm ordinance, and even step up to pay false alarm response fees/fines for their customer if they believe that the fine was unjust. For their company-wide commitment to false alarm reduction and the pursuit of cordial working relationships with public safety in the communities they serve, Priority One Security is more than worthy of this award.

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**Industry False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award Honorable Mention  
Custom Alarm/Communications, Inc.**

**Information is not available**

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**Industry False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award Honorable Mention  
Diebold, Inc.**

**Information is not available**

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**Industry False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award Honorable Mention  
Sonitrol Security Services, Ontario, Canada**

**Nominated by:** Gerry Miller, FARA Board Member.

**Rationale:** I would like to nominate Sonitrol Security Services for this award. They have not only worked closely with Public Safety Alarm Units to lower their false alarm rate but, worked with officers during many investigations.

Sonitrol provides businesses with a single source of integrated, state-of-the-art security solutions for intrusion, video, access and fire all backed with professional monitoring by experienced, trained personnel. **Sonitrol's technology has the ability to verify an alarm event in real time.** Police can be dispatched immediately (call verification not required) and therefore, based on the information provided police will dispatch as a verified call for service. They have audio technology to advise the location of the culprits in the building; their operator will stay on line with police to update the status of the culprits which is essential for officer safety.

Several culprits have been apprehended over the years with the assistance of Sonitrol. When the apprehension rate increases so does the deterrent factor of the alarm system and the loss is reduced making the alarm system a crime prevention tool for which it was installed.

**Sonitrol's Customer Service Representatives work closely with Public Safety Alarm Units and their customers to keep premise records current and to reduce false alarms.** They educate their customers on Police By-laws and set their procedures accordingly. They also, work very closely with officers providing video and audio tapes to aid in their investigations. They will meet regularly with the local Public Safety **Alarm Units to discuss accounts and Sonitrol's business plan. They were one of the first Canadian Security Companies to join FARA.**

When Dave Jones, the President of Sonitrol Security Services of Canada was invited to attend the FARA Regional Training Seminar he was more than happy to attend, give a presentation, and participate in the activities of the day. Mr. Jones invited me to attend a Sonitrol meeting in Toronto and present to over

twenty Sonitrol Managers/Owners across the U.S.A. a FARA presentation which generated a great interest from everyone.

Sonitrol's success in working with Public Safety has been proven in the reduction of false alarms by their false alarm rate of .35 for Commercial premises. I believe their professionalism and dedication to doing the right thing is deserving of this award.

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## **Industry False Alarm Reduction Achievement Award Honorable Mention** **Vintage Security, LLC**

Vintage Security has instituted several outstanding false alarm prevention initiatives over the past several years, which has helped to reduce false alarms for all of their customers as well as reduce the number of times public safety officers have to respond. They instituted a program where they track all false alarms for their customers and then reach out to them to determine the cause and fix the problem. After the first false alarm from each customer, Vintage Security sends a post card advising that authorities were sent and to request that the customer call if service or training is needed. If a second false alarm occurs, Vintage personnel personally contact the customer to follow up utilizing a specific script so that all tools available to help the customer prevent future false alarms are discussed. Vintage offers additional free system demonstrations to retrain alarm users. Vintage employs Enhanced Call Verification on all of their accounts, which means that an initial phone call is made to the site after a burglar alarm activation in an attempt to determine its validity. If no answer, a second call is made to a different phone number, generally a responsible party's cell phone. **These two calls are made *prior*** to requesting law enforcement dispatch in an attempt to avoid an unnecessary dispatch. All systems installed by Vintage Security comply with SIA ANSI CP-01 Control Panel Standard for false alarm prevention. Vintage Security is an Installation Quality certified company, which means that they meet or exceed the strict requirements of the IQ program in terms of equipment installation and false alarm prevention.

Vintage is a contributing member of the Maryland Burglar and Fire Alarm Association. They are also contributing members of FARA. One of their employees also serves as the Associate Director on the Board of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of FARA. Vintage hosted one of the most successful Mid-Atlantic meetings at their facility in Jessup, where they served as subject matter experts and answered numerous questions raised by area public safety in the areas of installation, service and monitoring. Vintage is also a contributor to the FARA Institute, which has allowed more public safety professionals to attend training symposiums than otherwise would have been able.

Given all that they do to foster good relations with public safety and their impressive false alarm prevention programs, Vintage Security is richly deserving of this award.

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## **FARA Achievement Award:**

Description: Significant or meaningful contributions towards the FARA mission.

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## **FARA Achievement Award Winner South Carolina Alarm Association**

**Nominated by:** Joe Patterson

**Rationale:** The FARA Achievement Award was presented to the **South Carolina Alarm Association (SCAA)** for their consistent willingness to work with local law enforcement agencies to solve false alarm problems, as well as for their dedication and assistance in helping to ensure that the Charleston training symposium was a success. They constantly strive to raise the bar for alarm professionals in South Carolina and provide services to help alarm industry professionals succeed. For example, they implemented NTS Level 1 and Level 2 training for alarm installers, created video recording classes to help the industry understand the importance of video recording installation, and held NICET prep classes to ensure that all installers are fully trained and aware of all technology. Additionally, they created and implemented a statewide model ordinance, which has been endorsed by both the SCAA and the South Carolina Police Chiefs Association, and can be used by jurisdictions as a guide when implementing their own local ordinances. SCAA includes public safety in their annual meetings and requested participation by public safety on many of their committees. Not only do they want to hear what we have to say, they act upon those suggestions whenever possible. By maintaining constant communication and actively pursuing false alarm reduction, the SCAA has been a key player in reducing false alarms throughout the State of South Carolina. The SCAA certainly fosters an environment of cooperation among public safety, the alarm industry and alarm users and is richly deserving of this award.

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## **FARA Achievement Award Honorable Mention California Alarm Association**

**Information is not available**