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# Sheriffs Working on New Alarm Standards – More Arrests/Fewer False Alarms

By Keith Jentoft, Videofied

Sheriffs are taking a proactive role in driving alarm technology to make more arrests with the **Partnership for Priority Video Alarm Response** (PPVAR). This public/private has brought together law enforcement, the alarm industry and the insurers to create new alarm standards and best practices to maximize the value of video alarms as a “force multiplier” in the battle against property crime. Video technology has made sheriffs more effective and permeated law enforcement with thousands of cameras installed in vehicles, jails, public buildings and other areas of interest. Affordable video alarms are simply the next logical step in using cameras to protect the commercial property and homes of our citizens. Sheriffs have already successfully deployed video alarm systems and they are making arrests in some difficult cases. A recent *Sheriff Magazine* case study covered how wireless video alarms used by “the Napa County Sheriff’s Office broke up an organized gang that had targeted the thousands of solar panels installed in Napa Valley’s wineries. Things had reached an epidemic with twelve wineries hit with over \$400,000 in losses.” With the costs coming down, video alarms are now migrating into homes and businesses and becoming a mainstream option to fight crime. Immediate past NSA president, Sheriff Larry Amerson, has created policies encouraging the use of video alarms in Calhoun County, “We believe that video verified alarms offer enhanced protection to you and help us in our efforts to keep Calhoun County citizens safe and protect their property.” What is the relevance of this comment?> Video alarm technology has been on the NSA’s radar for some time and sheriffs are now helping create the new alarm standards to make more arrests and reduce false alarms.

Traditional alarm standards have historically been developed without input from law enforcement and false alarm problems continue to tax declining law enforcement resources. While false alarm reduction tools such as ECV and cross-zoning are reducing false police dispatches, they do not provide true alarm verification. There is a growing desire from law enforcement to move beyond “false alarm avoidance” and use audio and video to verify a “crime in progress” and make more arrests. The PPVAR brings law enforcement and the alarm industry together and includes representatives from both sheriff’s offices and police departments. The goal of the PPVAR standards effort is to create and formalize



## PPVAR SESSION #1 - Law Enforcement, Insurance and UL *Text Screen Intro with YouTube link*

- Video 1 of 14 - Don Young, CIO, Protection 1, President of PPVAR. Steve Walker, VP Stanley Security, VP of PPVAR. Length = 5:55: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9MoCdWZW4G0>
- Video 2 of 14 - James Hughes, Texas Crime Commission. Length = 4:05: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NH0RrX1nZ08>
- Video 3 of 14 - Sheriff Paul Fitzgerald, Immediate Past President of National Sheriffs Assn. Length = 7:33: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RLPyFuPyNQ>
- Video 4 of 14 - Commander Scott Edson - Los Angeles Sheriffs Dept. Length = 6:02: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6hgv\\_q4yMcc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6hgv_q4yMcc)
- Video 5 of 14 - Fred Lohmann, National Insurance Crime Bureau. Length = 8:26: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Etnu8hyjGE>
- Video 6 of 14 - Anthony Canale, Verisk Crime Analytics. Length = 7:51: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VvBWDoxfEvE>
- Video 7 of 14 - Steve Schmitt, Underwriters Laboratories. Length = 3:30: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VC4B0HS99D8>
- Video 8 of 14 - Questions from the Audience. Length = 19:11: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9J1UsqMv9mo>

## PPVAR SESSION #2 - Westec, CMS, Honeywell, Imperial Capital, Pritchard *Text Screen Intro with YouTube link*

- Video 9 of 14 - Chuck Moeling, Interface Security Systems. Length = 7:23: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3aM-xh2FGZw&feature=youtu.be>
- Video 10 of 14 - Tony Wilson - President of Criticom Monitoring Services. Length = 4:01: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gb1EdlvdpBQ&feature=youtu.be>
- Video 11 of 14 - Scott Harkins, Honeywell Security Products, Americas. Length = 10:06: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-zsVY\\_ykis&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-zsVY_ykis&feature=youtu.be)
- Video 12 of 14 - John Mack, Imperial Capital. Length = 11:12: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ps8uYhfXtco&feature=youtu.be>
- Video 13 of 14 - Eric Pritchard, Kleinbard Bell & Brecker LLP. Length = 8:22: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qk6wtj47m08&feature=youtu.be>
- Video 14 of 14 - Questions from Audience. Length = 11:32: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZpH2eb6WHtQ&feature=youtu.be>



best practices for alarm companies and monitoring centers that maximize the value of the video and audio alarms to fight property crime, make arrests and reduce false alarms. Many of these “best practices” involve the communication between the monitoring central station operator and the 911 Center. Sheriffs have a significant role to play because in many areas of the country, sheriffs are responsible for the PSAP (Public Safety Answering Point) or 911 center which ends up coordinating law enforcement dispatch (police and deputies) to alarm signals in the county. With video and audio verified alarms, the central operator is a remote eyewitness to a crime in progress; a more valuable call than a simple alarm signal from a door contact or motion sensor. A video alarm provides more information and video clips of the actual event can even be sent to the PSAP for review, if desired. Video alarms also mean greater situational awareness and officer safety for those responding to the crime. Law enforcement input to the PPVAR video verification committee is crucial as they define communication protocols to the 911 call takers, as well as how best to transmit the video clips of the actual events to law enforcement.

The PPVAR is a true public/private partnership and past NSA president, Sheriff Paul Fitzgerald, is on the board of directors. Sheriff Fitzgerald personally participated in the video verification committee launch. He has tasked his Story County PSAP manager to work with the committee and help drive new video verified alarm standards. As part of this effort, Sheriff Adrian Garcia from Harris County has been working with PPVAR co-chair Efrain Saenz, who oversees a major Houston-based monitoring station and has a long history of working with the Harris County PSAP. When it comes to communications, the Los Angeles Sheriff's Dept. (LASD) has one of the largest and most complex 911 operations in the country with over 23 actual PSAPs spread across the county as the LASD provides primary law enforcement services to over three million people. Commander Scott Edson is responsible for the LASD communications and a supporter of the PPVAR. LASD already has an official document outlining their policy on priority response for video verified alarms and this is being used as a model in other jurisdictions. Cmdr. Edson has tasked one of his PSAP managers to provide guidance to the PPVAR committee creating these new alarm standards. The PPVAR hosted an industry seminar at the largest trade show in the alarm business, the International Security Conference (ISC West). Both Sheriff Fitzgerald and Cmdr. Edson spoke to leaders of the major alarm companies the PPVAR and video alarms were strengthening the partnership with law enforcement and making Sheriffs more efficient and effective.

While sheriffs are well represented, the committees also include the police. The Texas Police Chiefs Assn, the California Assn. of Police Chiefs and the Indiana Assn. of Police Chiefs are also involved as

is law enforcement from four of the five largest cities in the US. Alarm industry giants already monitoring millions of alarm systems like AT&T Digital Life, Protection 1, Stanley Security and the large national monitoring stations are helping move the project forward. In addition, the insurance industry is very involved in the PPAVR committees and sees the new standards as a way to reduce property losses. Ultimately, the insurers end up footing the bill for property crime and underwriters are extremely supportive of video verified alarms and priority response to make arrests – the ultimate deterrent for property crime. The insurance partners include the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) which is funded by over 1,100 property/casualty insurance companies. The NICB is already working with many sheriffs providing bait cars and other tools on behalf of insurers to fight crime. Verisk Crime Analytics is on the PPVAR board of directors and is a major resource of risk and loss data to the underwriters. Finally, Underwriters Laboratories (UL) is a key member of the committees and provides invaluable input as the committee works to draft a standard that will be useful to all the stakeholders in the battle against property crime.

The PPVAR standards will be a major step forward for sheriffs, insurers and the alarm industry, and most importantly for the citizens that subscribe to security services and for every citizen that ultimately subsidizes the cost of property losses through insurance premiums. These standards will help police and sheriffs as they construct response policies and ordinances because they reflect the needs and concerns of the police and sheriffs – as well as the alarm industry. This fact was recently highlighted by Chief Steve Dye in a report to the Texas Police chiefs Assn., “Involvement in the PPVAR is important for those of us in law enforcement, to have significant input in the emerging trend of video alarms. Unfortunately, we were not asked to be at the table when the traditional alarm best practices were established and we have been paying the price since then.” The sheriffs have a voice in the next generation of alarm systems and the entire community will benefit from their involvement. For more information on the PPVAR visit [www.ppvar.org](http://www.ppvar.org). ★



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