



FALSE ALARM REDUCTION PROGRAM

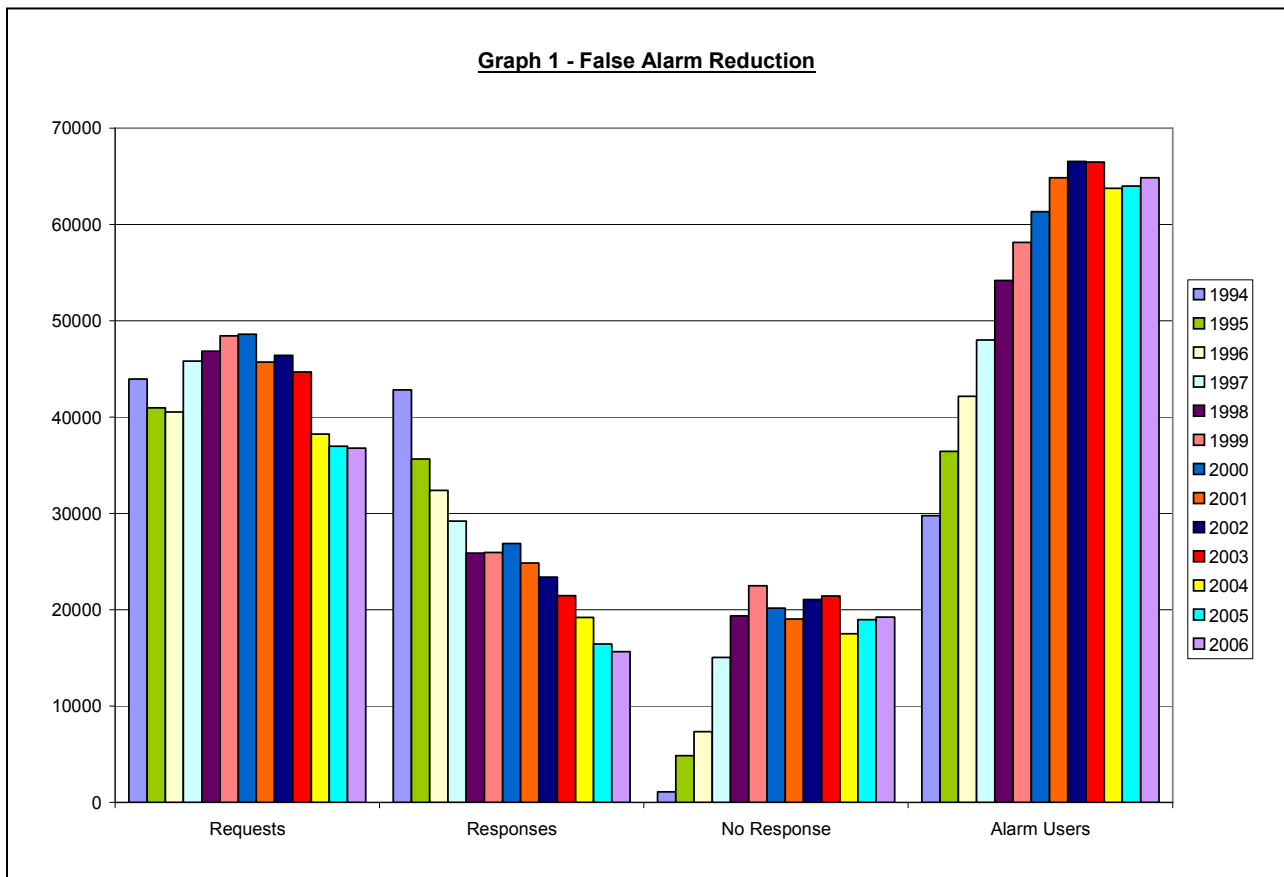


***ANNUAL REPORT
FOR YEAR ENDING 2006***

False Alarm Reduction

The False Alarm Reduction Section (FARS) of the Montgomery County Department of Police completed its eleventh year of enforcement under the amended Chapter 3A, Alarms, of the Montgomery County Code. The FARS reports that there was an additional, substantial decrease in the incidence of false alarms between 2005 and 2006, despite an increase of 5805 new alarm users. The FARS also engaged in new enforcement projects, training of law enforcement and alarm industry professionals, participated in numerous regional public safety alarm management meetings and developed a process to accept credit card payments.

In calendar year 2006, false alarms to which police officers were required to respond were reduced by an additional 4.8%, which brings the total to a full 64.4% reduction in false alarms since enforcement of the False Alarm Reduction Program began in earnest in March 1995. Additionally, police officers responded to 27,169 *less* alarm calls in 2006 over 1994. These statistics, coupled with a 118% increase in the number of registered alarm users over the same time period, clearly shows that substantial and *sustained* false alarm reduction is still being achieved even after eleven years and that the alarm law is an excellent tool in reducing false alarms and positively changing alarm user and alarm business behavior. It is also a testament to a well-written, enforceable law and a highly dedicated and talented FARS staff.



Graph 1 – False Alarm Reduction, provides information on the number of *requests* for dispatch vs. *actual responses* (dispatched). If the false alarm reduction program is successful, the responses should continue to decrease relative to the number of total alarm users, and this fact is evident in the graph. The graph also provides information on calls where no response was made, as well as the total number of alarm users. The number of actual alarm calls to which police officers respond has continued to decrease. Police responded to only 15,652 of the total 36,751 requests made, or 42.6%. There were a total of 19,230 alarm activations to which the police were not required to respond in 2006.

Additionally, the number of *requests for dispatch* is at a new all-time low. In 2006, there were a total of 36,751 requests for dispatch to alarm activations, which is down for the second year in a row. Requests for dispatch remained fairly static between 1994 and 2003 and results were measured in how many *less* responses police officers were required to make. While this is still the most important measure of the success of the program, 2006 marked the third year running where a decrease in the number of requests for dispatch was achieved, which continues to have far-reaching benefits for the Police Department beyond savings measured in police officer time. Less actual alarm calls into our Emergency Communications Center means time recovered for Police Telecommunicators to handle other requests for service from Montgomery County citizens. This is an extremely positive measure, which is directly attributable to the alarm industry's continued Enhanced Call Verification (ECV) initiative.

Chapter 3A, Alarms, of the Montgomery County Code requires alarm companies to attempt to verify the validity of an alarm signal *prior* to requesting police dispatch. This attempted verification generally requires one telephone call be made to the site to determine the cause of the alarm signal. In 2004, some alarm companies in Montgomery County voluntarily instituted Enhanced Call Verification in which they make the initial call to the site, and if unable to reach a responsible party, make at least one additional telephone call to another phone number, usually the customer's cell phone. This voluntary initiative continued to show positive effects in 2006 further reducing the number of actual calls for service for alarm activations into our 9-1-1 center.

Absent enforcement of the alarm statute, coupled with an overall increase in alarm users, one would expect that the actual dispatches to alarm activations would increase substantially, or at least at the same rate of growth. **However, actual responses to alarm activations were reduced by an additional 4.8% between 2005 and 2006.**

In 1994, Montgomery County police officers responded on 97.5% of all requests for dispatch (43,936 requests for dispatch with 42,821 actual responses). However, in 2006, police officers responded to only 42.6% of all requests for dispatch (36,751 requests for dispatch with only 15,652 actual responses). Part of the reason for this discrepancy in requests for dispatch vs. actual response is due to the requirement that an alarm company cancel a police response when it is determined that an alarm activation is false. This is achieved through telephone or other electronic verification with the alarm user at the time of alarm system activation. The high number of non-responses (19,230) was due, in part, to that required cancellation by alarm companies. The higher the number of cancellations, the better the job the alarm companies are doing of reducing the number of false alarms to which police officers respond. In 2006, alarm companies cancelled 8,632 requests for dispatch, which represents 23.5% of the total requests for dispatch. These cancellations

provide officers with more time to engage in other more critical law enforcement related activities and community policing initiatives.

The FARS also continued its strict enforcement of all requirements for requesting dispatch, including providing the correct alarm user registration and alarm business license numbers. Police officers were not dispatched when an alarm business failed to provide all of the required information to Emergency Communications Center call-takers. Nor were police dispatched if an alarm user was in a violation status for failure to register, failure to pay a false alarm response fee or failure to upgrade the alarm system when required to do so. The legally mandated non-response provisions of the alarm law resulted in only 2,282 requests for dispatch that were denied as a result of the violation status of the alarm user or alarm business. This represents only 6.3% of the total requests for alarm dispatch. The FARS will continue to work to reduce this percentage to negligible numbers.

Graph 2 and Chart 1 – Requests for Dispatch vs. Actual Responses depict the difference between the requests for dispatch and the actual responses since 1994. As stated previously, requests for dispatch in 2006 continued to decline. The actual responses (15,652) to requests also continued its downward trend. This, coupled with 5,805 new alarm users, is incredibly positive and demonstrates the effectiveness of Montgomery County’s alarm law.

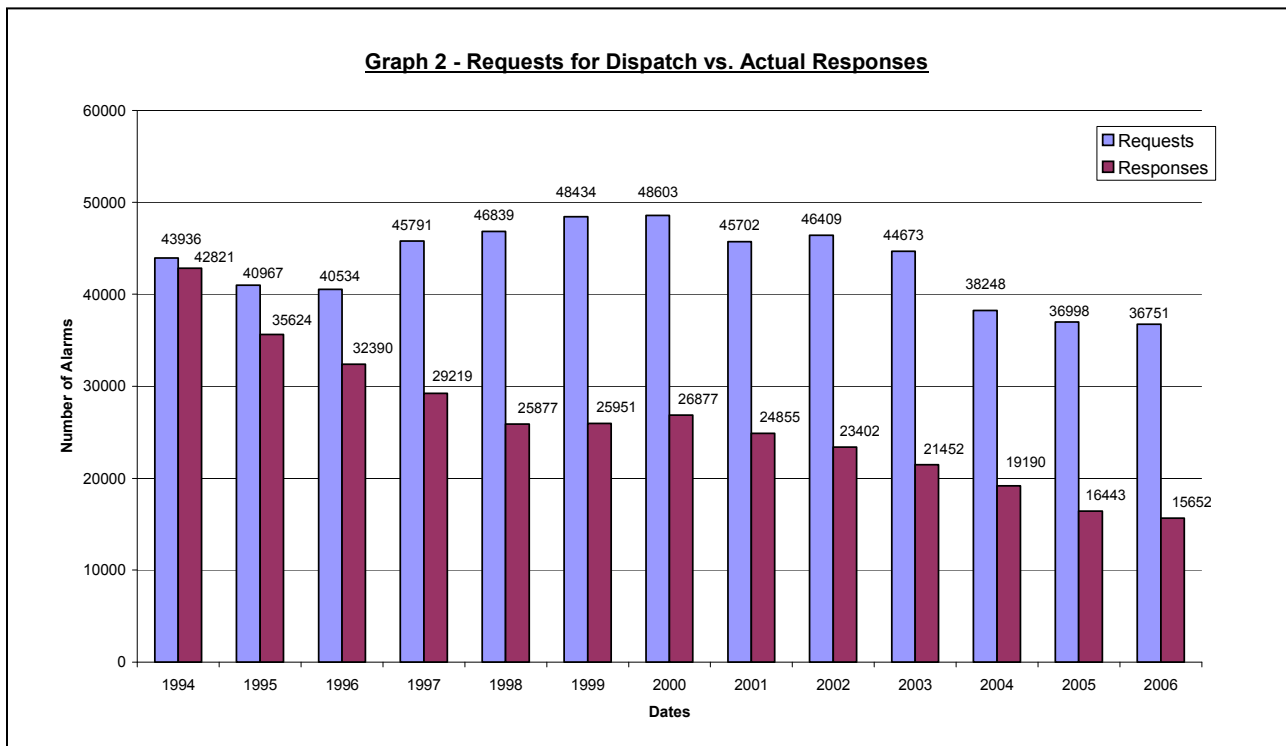


Chart 1 – Requests for Dispatch vs. Actual Responses

<u>Year</u>	<u>Requests for Dispatch</u>	<u>Actual Responses</u>	<u>Percentage of Total Calls Responded To</u>
1994	43,936	42,821	97.5%
1995	40,967	35,624	87.0%
1996	40,534	32,390	79.9%
1997	45,791	29,219	63.8%
1998	46,839	25,877	55.3%
1999	48,434	25,951	53.9%
2000	48,603	26,877	55.3%
2001	45,702	24,855	54.4%
2002	46,409	23,402	50.5%
2003	44,673	21,452	52.0%
2004	38,248	19,190	49.8%
2005	36,998	16,443	44.4%
2006	36,751	15,652	42.6%

The false alarm dispatch rate is perhaps the truest measure of false alarm reduction, as it calculates the number of false alarm dispatches relative to the total number of alarm users. The false alarm dispatch rate is the only rate, which takes into account the growth of the alarm user base. **The Security Industry Alarm Coalition (SIAC), which represents the four major alarm industry associations in North America, states that Montgomery County has the lowest combined false alarm dispatch rates of any jurisdiction in the country.** The residential false alarm dispatch rate decreased once again in 2006 to .16. Overall, residential alarm users experience less than one false alarm every five years, which is a truly remarkable statistic. The commercial false alarm dispatch rate for 2006 dropped to an incredible low of .76. Combined residential and commercial false alarm dispatch rates fell to an all-time low of .24.

When the dispatch rates are as low as they are in Montgomery County, even a .01% decline reflects a significant reduction. Commercial dispatch rates dropped a whopping .10%, while residential rates dropped a further .02%. The combined dispatch rate has been reduced 119% since 1994.

Chart 2 – False Alarm Dispatch Rates

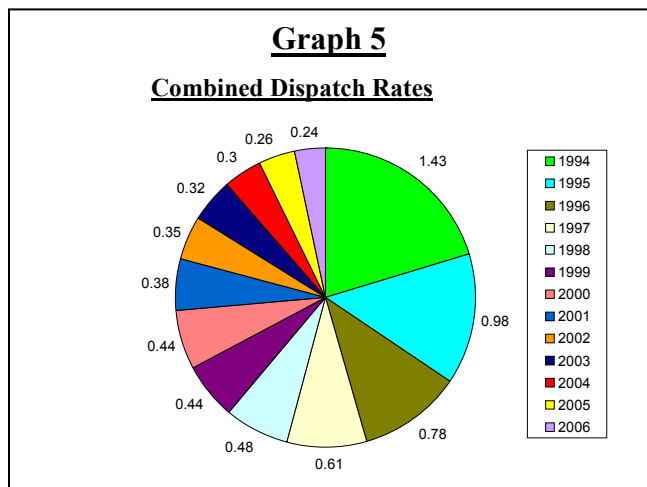
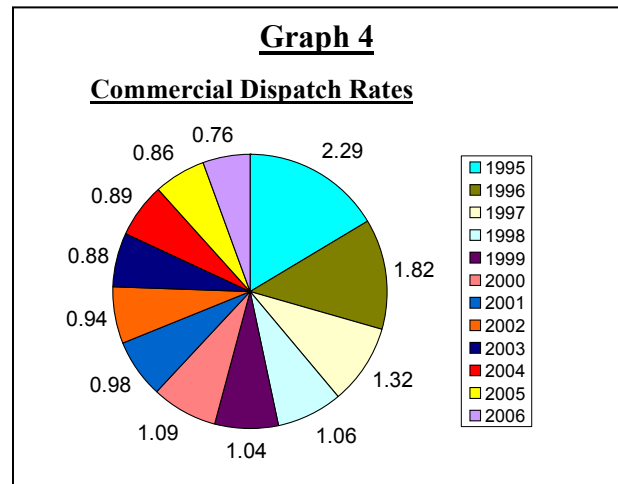
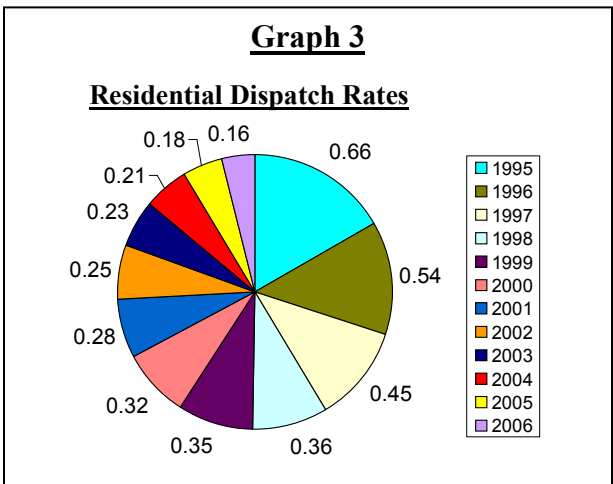
<u>Year</u>	<u>Residential</u>	<u>Commercial</u>	<u>Combined</u>
1994	N/A	N/A	1.43
1995	.66	2.29	.98
1996	.54	1.82	.78
1997	.45	1.32	.61
1998	.36	1.06	.48
1999	.35	1.04	.44
2000	.32	1.09	.44
2001	.28	.98	.38
2002	.25	.94	.35
2003	.23	.88	.32
2004	.21	.89	.30
2005	.18	.86	.26
2006	.16	.76	.24

Nationwide statistics often reveal reduction in false alarms for the first several years after enactment and enforcement of a false alarm reduction ordinance begins. However, after the first few years, the numbers generally either level off with no further reduction or actually start to increase. Since the Montgomery County false alarm reduction program has been in effect, it has consistently reduced the false alarm dispatch rate (with the exception of 2000, which remained constant overall) and has done so for a full eleven years. Few, if any, other jurisdictions can boast such a phenomenal success rate.

Commercial false alarm dispatch rates have been reported as high as 4.0 and residential false alarm dispatch rates as high as 1.0 or above. A dispatch rate of 4.0 means that *every* alarm user has four actual responses *every* year. Using 2006 statistics, that would equate to 36,332 actual responses to alarm activations for *commercial alarm users alone*; a figure more than double the *total* responses for residential and commercial alarm users *combined* in 2006.

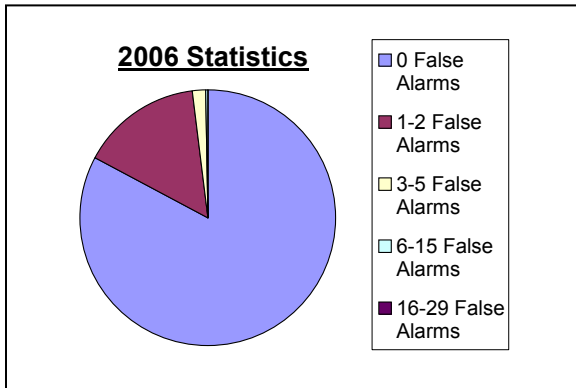
Assuming Montgomery County's dispatch rate would have risen a modest amount to 2.0 without enforcement of the alarm law, police officers would have actually responded to 129,670 false alarm activations in 2006, which would represent an *828% increase* in response to false alarms. At \$90 per dispatch, those 129,670 alarm activations would require approximately 42 police officers to do absolutely nothing but respond to burglar alarms at a staggering cost of \$11,670,300. This is clearly a cost that no local jurisdiction can absorb.

The following pie charts (Graphs 3, 4 and 5) graphically depict the significant reductions in residential, non-residential and combined false alarm dispatch rates over the eleven year enforcement period.



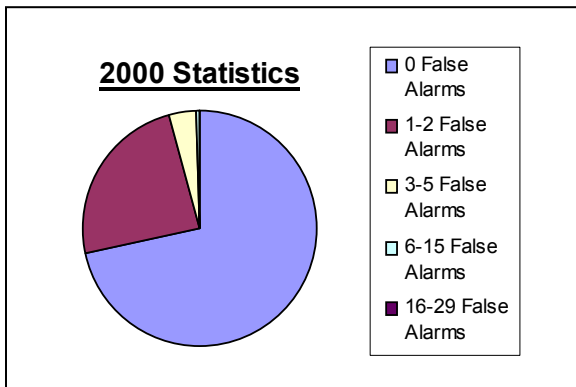
In 2005, an impressive 81.6% of all residential and commercial alarm users experienced no false alarms at all. A total of 54,753 alarm users, had zero false alarm activations to which police officers responded in 2006. The following pie graphs show that more alarm users (as a percentage of total alarm users for a given year) are achieving the zero false alarm threshold. This statistic, which is supported by the low false dispatch rate, is indicative of the success of the overall false alarm reduction program. These reductions become more significant when viewed with the steady increase in the number of alarm users each year.

Threshold Statistics



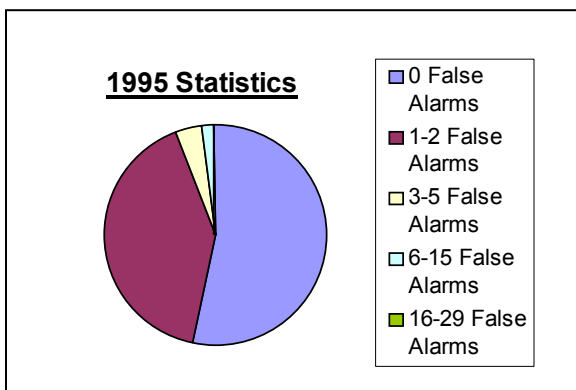
2006 Threshold Statistics	
False Alarms	Alarm Users
0	54,753
1-2	10,082
3-5	1,085
6-15	199
16-29	12

Total 2006 Alarm Users = 64,835



2000 Threshold Statistics	
False Alarms	Alarm Users
0	45,684
1-2	15,650
3-5	2,378
6-15	362
16-29	14

Total 2000 Alarm Users = 61,334



1995 Threshold Statistics	
False Alarms	Alarm Users
0	20,468
1-2	15,968
3-5	1,559
6-15	618
16-29	19

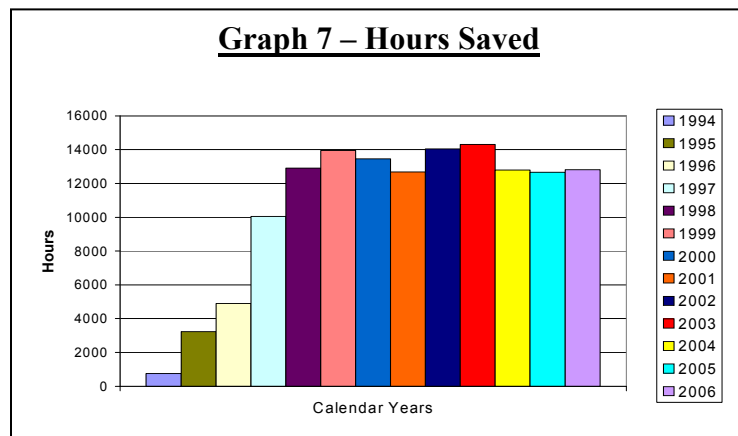
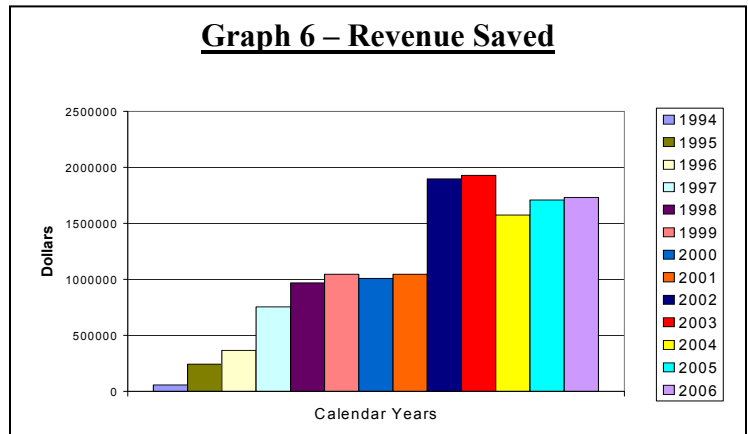
Total 1995 Alarm Users = 36,436

As a direct result of the FARS's strict enforcement of the alarm law, there were 19,230 alarm calls to which police officers were not required to respond in 2006. **This equates to savings in 2006 of approximately \$1,730,700 and 12,820 hours of police officer time, or 12.32 police work years.** (Monetary savings are based on a cost of \$90 per response. Work year savings are based on an average of 20 minutes per alarm response by two officers.) This timesaving is substantial, particularly when the department is being asked to do more with less each year.

The following graphs illustrate the revenues, hours and work years saved as a result of the false alarm reduction program.

Graph 6 shows that the actual revenue saved in 2006 as a result of police officers responding to 19,230 less false alarms was \$1,730,700. Since the FARS began enforcement of the alarm statute, the total revenue saved by Montgomery County has been \$14,326,750.

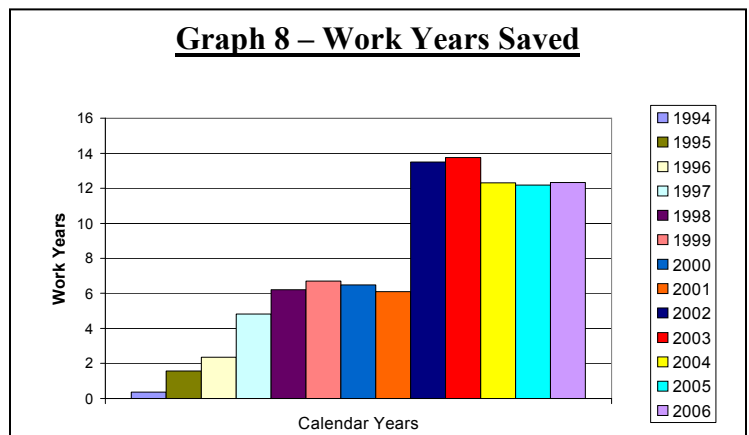
(The dramatic difference in 2002 savings and subsequent years is due to using a more realistic figure of \$90 per response, as opposed to \$55 in 2001 and \$50 for previous years.)



Graph 7 shows that the actual hours saved in 2006 as a result of police officers responding to 19,230 less false alarms was 12,820 hours. Since the FARS began enforcement of the alarm statute, Montgomery County has recovered 138,514 hours in police officer time.

Graph 8 shows that 12.32 actual work years were saved in 2006 as a result of enforcement of the alarm statute. Since enforcement began, Montgomery County has recovered a total of 98.61 work years of police officer time.

(The dramatic difference starting in 2002 vs. previous years is due to erroneously using a full 2080 hours as a work year measure between 1994 and 2001, which is not an accurate figure.)



The total savings in dollars, hours and work years since 1994 have been significant and are depicted in Chart 3 below. As stated previously in this report, absent strict enforcement of the alarm statute, Montgomery County would have **paid** more than \$11,000,000 in 2006 alone responding to false alarms. The \$14,326,750 savings to the county is, therefore, even more significant.

Chart 3 – Cumulative Savings

Year	Revenue Saved	Hours Saved	Work Years Saved
1994	\$ 55,750	743	.35
1995	\$ 242,750	3,236	1.56
1996	\$ 366,950	4,892	2.35
1997	\$ 752,850	10,038	4.82
1998	\$ 968,550	12,914	6.21
1999	\$1,046,600	13,954	6.71
2000	\$1,008,600	13,448	6.47
2001	\$1,046,430	12,684	6.10
2002	\$1,895,760	14,043	13.5
2003	\$1,928,790	14,301	13.75
2004	\$1,574,280	12,794	12.30
2005	\$1,708,740	12,657	12.17
2006	\$1,730,700	12,820	12.32
TOTAL	\$14,326,750	138,514	98.61

Government Alarm Users

In calendar year 2006, the FARS had 561 registered federal, state and local government facilities, up from 545 in 2005, all of which were held to the same strict standards as all other alarm users. Of the 561 government alarm users, 130 or 23.2%, had at least one false alarm. This shows a nominal increase of less than 1% over 2005. Those 130 alarm users collectively had 268 false alarms. A total of 431 different government alarm users (76.8%) had **zero** false alarms, which is down slightly from 2005 (77.8%), but which still reflects better statistics than for all other commercial alarm users.

Chart 4 shows 12 different government alarm users had five or more false alarms in 2006. With the exception of one alarm user, who had five false alarms, all of the rest came from one particular type of federal facility, which has multiple locations throughout Montgomery County. The FARS staff has been working with these government alarm users over the past year to identify the problems and suggest solutions that can be implemented to reduce or eliminate false alarms from these facilities. There has been some improvement with these alarm users, but FARS staff will continue working with them throughout 2007 to correct the problems.

Chart 4 – Government Alarm Users

# of False Alarms	# of Alarm Users - 1999	# of Alarm Users – 2000	# of Alarm Users - 2001	# of Alarm Users - 2002	# of Alarm Users - 2003	# of Alarm Users - 2004	# of Alarm Users – 2005	# of Alarm Users - 2006
0	332	355	355	404	400	354	424	431
1	72	54	50	69	74	94	71	80
2	22	17	33	22	17	34	24	27
3	13	14	5	10	2	12	7	7
4	2	7	4	3	3	9	3	4
5	1	1	2	0	0	3	3	4
6	0	1	1	3	1	3	2	3
7	1	0	2	2	0	3	3	0
8	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
9	1	2	0	2	0	1	1	0
10-13	1	0	0	1	0	2	4	3
14-21	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	1

Chart 4 is different from Charts 10-12, which appear later in this report, in that the number of alarm users at each threshold level is **not** included in the preceding level. For example, the chart reflects that 80 government alarm users had one false alarm and 27 government alarm users had two false alarms. The 27 at the two threshold are **not** included in the 80 count for one false alarm. Another way to view this report is that 80 government alarm users had one and only one false alarm. An additional 27 government alarm users had two and only two false alarms. An additional seven government alarm users had three and only three false alarms and so on. Adding up the 2006 column will show the total number of government alarm users at 561.

Revenue

The following two charts reflect revenue collected by the FARS for alarm user registration and renewal fees, false alarm response fees, alarm business license and administrative fees, civil citations and appeal filing fees. The first chart covers *calendar* year 2006. The second chart covers *fiscal* year 06. The FY06 chart is included only as a reference, because budget projections are based on fiscal rather than calendar years. The more accurate chart is the calendar year 2006 chart, as false alarms and the resultant false alarm response fees, are calculated on a calendar year basis.

Chart 5 – Calendar Year Revenue

CALENDAR YEAR 2006	ACTUAL REVENUES
<u>Alarm User Registration Fees</u>	
Residential	\$146,791
Commercial	<u>27,360</u>
TOTAL	\$174,151
<u>Alarm User Registration Renewal Fees</u>	
Residential	\$198,570
Commercial	<u>32,580</u>
TOTAL	\$231,150
<u>False Alarm Response Fees</u>	
Residential	\$ 65,025
County Attorney Collections	<u>14,175</u>
Total Residential	\$ 79,200
Commercial	\$384,040
County Attorney Collections	<u>53,745</u>
Total Commercial	\$437,785
TOTAL	\$516,985
<u>Alarm Business Fees</u>	
License	\$ 75,260
Civil Citations	16,000
Administrative Fees	<u>1,230</u>
TOTAL	\$ 92,490
<u>Appeal Filing Fees</u>	
Residential	\$ 375
Commercial	<u>105</u>
TOTAL	\$ 480
<u>Alarm User Civil Citations</u>	
Residential	\$ 0
Commercial	<u>500</u>
TOTAL	\$ 500
GRAND TOTAL	\$1,015,756

Chart 6 – Fiscal Year Revenue

FISCAL YEAR 06	ACTUAL REVENUES
<u>Alarm User Registration Fees</u>	
Residential	\$163,081
Commercial	<u>28,440</u>
TOTAL	\$191,521
<u>Alarm User Registration Renewal Fees</u>	
Residential	\$198,117
Commercial	<u>36,440</u>
TOTAL	\$234,557
<u>False Alarm Response Fees</u>	
Residential	\$ 71,999
County Attorney Collections	<u>14,820</u>
Total Residential	\$ 86,819
Commercial	\$339,995
County Attorney Collections	<u>75,777</u>
Total Commercial	\$415,772
TOTAL	\$502,591
<u>Alarm Business Fees</u>	
License	\$ 76,800
Civil Citations	16,500
Administrative Fees	<u>1,878</u>
TOTAL	\$ 95,178
<u>Appeal Filing Fees</u>	
Residential	\$ 405
Commercial	<u>150</u>
TOTAL	\$ 555
GRAND TOTAL	\$1,024,402

Collection of false alarm response fees is always a priority for the FARS. Strict enforcement of this aspect of the alarm law clearly shows that Montgomery County is serious about false alarms. The FARS collection rate in 2006 was an extraordinary 92.0% of all false alarm response fees billed. This is up from last years collection figure of 90.9%. The suspension of police response provision in Chapter 3A, Alarms, for failure to remit false alarm response fees greatly enhances the FARS’s ability to collect on unpaid bills.

The following chart reflects the amount billed for false alarm response fees in 2006 versus the amount collected for both residential and commercial alarm users. Please note that the “collected” amount in the following chart reflects payments made against false alarms that occurred in 2006. The actual collection of monies for those calendar year 2006 false alarms extended into calendar year 2007, and, therefore, reflects different totals from the Calendar Year Revenue Chart.

**Chart 7 – Calendar Year 2006 Billed vs. Collected
False Alarm Response Fees**

False Alarm Response Fees	Billed	Collected*	Past Due (>30 & <51 days overdue)	Delinquent (>50 days overdue)
Commercial	\$445,875	\$417,700	\$20,525	\$7,400
Residential	\$78,650	\$65,000	\$6,675	\$6,900
Total	\$524,525	\$482,700	\$27,200	\$14,300

*Represents fees collected in 2006 and 2007 against false alarm response fees billed in 2006.

The FARS is in the process of attempting to collect the past due amounts listed above. The FARS has sent overdue notices to all affected alarm users. The \$14,300 listed above has been referred to the Office of the County Attorney for collection and the affected alarm users have been placed in a non-response status until payment is received.

General Statistics

Chart 8 shows false alarm reduction statistics from 1994, when the new alarm law was in effect but false alarm response fees were not yet being imposed, through 2006. The chart shows the actual number of requests for dispatch, the number of calls that were ultimately dispatched and to which response was made, requests where no response was required or was refused, verified calls and the percentage of false alarm reduction. Verified calls include actual criminal activity, as well as suspicious situations such as an open door with no other evidence of criminal activity. Circumstances under which no response may occur include cancellation of response by the alarm company, duplicate calls for the same alarm activation, blanket cancellations by supervisory police personnel and refusals where the alarm company or alarm user was in a violation status.

Chart 8 – False Alarm Reduction

Year	Requests for Dispatch	Dispatched	No Response	Verified Calls	% Reduction	% Reduction From Base
1994	43,936	42,821	1,115*			
1995	40,967	35,624	4,855	488	-16.8%	-15.7%
1996	40,534	32,390	7,339	805	-9.1%	-24.3%
1997	45,791	29,219	15,057	1,515	-9.8%	-32.0%
1998	46,839	25,877	19,371	1,591	-11.4%	-39.6%
1999	48,434	25,951	20,932	1,551	+003%	-39.4%
2000	48,603	26,877	20,172	1,554	+035%	-37.2%
2001	45,702	24,855	19,026	1,821	-7.5%	-41.9%
2002	46,409	23,402	21,064	1,943	-5.8%	-45.3%
2003	44,673	21,452	21,431	1,790	-8.3%	-49.9%
2004	38,248	19,190	17,492	1,566	-10.5%	-55.2%
2005	36,998	16,443	18,986	1,569	-14.3%	-61.6%
2006	36,751	15,652	19,230	1,869	-4.8%	-64.4%

*Does not include dispatch vs. non-dispatch or verified calls for January, February or March, 1994, as statistics for those months are not available.

Chart 9 reflects the number of alarm users each year since 1994. Alarm user registrations have more than doubled since implementation and enforcement of the false alarm reduction program began in 1994. The FARS received 5,805 new alarm user registration forms in 2006. This increase, coupled with the 64.4% decrease in alarm activations to which police officers must respond each year, is truly remarkable. The success and results of this program are what make it a model for other municipalities across the country.

Chart 9 – Alarm Users

Year	Residential	Commercial	Combined
1994	N/A	N/A	29,756
1995	39,398	7,049	36,436
1996	34,048	8,102	42,150
1997	39,192	8,879	48,008
1998	44,827	9,348	54,175
1999	48,654	9,489	58,143
2000	51,743	9,591	61,334
2001	55,024	9,812	64,836
2002	57,026	9,499	66,525
2003	57,223	9,241	66,474
2004	54,960	8,788	63,748
2005	55,095	8,875	63,970
2006	55,752	9,083	64,835

Chart 9 does not reflect an increase of overall alarm users by 5,805 (the number of new registered alarm users), because some alarm users each year move out of the area or remove their alarm systems and are no longer required to have an alarm user registration. Additionally, with alarm user registration renewal, the FARS is much better able to keep the alarm user database current by removing those alarm users, who no longer have an alarm system or have moved. This allows the FARS to perform statistical analysis using more accurate numbers, which provides for more meaningful and accurate reporting.

The following charts depict the number of alarm users that had a specific number of false alarms from 1995 through 2006 for select years. The charts also show the percentage of change between 2005 vs. 2006, as well as the percentage of change between the base year of 1995 and 2006, which shows the reduction of false alarms since inception of the program. Chart 10 shows residential alarm users. Chart 11 shows commercial alarm users, and Chart 12 reflects total alarm users (both residential and commercial combined).

In 2006, 54,753 alarm users had ZERO false alarms to which police officers were required to respond. This represents 84.5% of all alarm users, which is up from 2005 statistics where 83.2% of alarm users had zero false alarms. Therefore, the most compelling statistic in these charts is in the number of alarm users that appear on the 0 row (meaning they have had no false alarms for the entire calendar year).

Charts 10-12 are calculated slightly different from the commensurate Chart 4, which reflects government alarm users only. The total number of alarm users for each category will be reflected in the zero and one false alarm rows. Those alarm users, who had two false alarms are included in the number that had one false alarm. Those alarm users with three false alarms, are included in the number that had two and one false alarms respectively. For example, Chart 10 shows that 48,802 alarm users had zero false alarms and 6,950 alarm users had one false alarm.

Those two lines add up to the total number of residential alarm users (55,752). Looking further, of the 6,950 alarm users, who had one false alarm, 1,302 of those alarm users went on to have a second false alarm. Of those 1,302, alarm users, 269 went on to have a third false alarm. The column proceeds in the same fashion throughout the entire chart.

The number of residential alarm users, who had no false alarms from 2005 to 2006, rose by 2.7%. As a percentage of the total, 87.6% of residential alarm users had no false alarms in 2006, which reflects an actual increase of 1.4% over 2005. Keep in mind that when viewing any of the statistical data in this report, it is important to look at those numbers in relation to the total number of alarm users. Since 1995, 169.4% more residential alarm users were able to remain within the zero false alarm threshold.

Chart 10
Residential Alarm Users
With Specific Numbers of False Alarms

# of False Alarms	1995	1998	2000	2002	2004	2005	2006	% Change (05-06)	% Base Change (95-06)
0	18116	33946	40,227	46,338	46098	47510	48802	+2.7%	+169.4%
1	11271	10881	11,516	10,688	8862	7585	6950	-8.4%	-38.3%
2	4153	3379	3,395	2,750	1840	1392	1302	-6.5%	-68.6%
3	1171	1012	945	664	421	327	269	-17.7%	-77.0%
4	668	309	251	184	98	99	64	-35.3%	-90.4%
5	292	106	91	54	22	30	17	-43.3%	-94.2%
6	128	40	30	14	5	12	6	-50.0%	-95.3%
7	50	15	11	2	3	3	1	-66.7%	-98.0%
8	19	6	3	1	2	1	1	0	-94.7%
9	9	2	0	0	1	0	1	+100%	-88.9%
10	7	1	0	0	1	0	1	+100%	-85.7%
11	6	0	0	0	1	0	1	+100%	-83.3%
12	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	+100%	-66.7%
13	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	+100%	0
14	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-100%
15	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-100%
16	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-100%

In 1995, one residential alarm user had 16 separate false alarms. With the exception of the one alarm user, who is reflected in the 7 through 13 false alarms, the highest number of false alarms by more than one residential alarm user was six, which reflects a 50% decrease in the threshold alarms for residential alarm users. One specific alarm user accounted for the 7th through 13th false alarms. FARS staff attempted to work with this alarm user individually and through his alarm company, but neither of us were successful. Additionally, this alarm user failed to pay the false alarm response fees assessed, is in a denied response status and has been referred to the Office of the County Attorney for collection action.

The number of commercial alarm users, who had no false alarms from 2005 to 2006, rose 3.8%. As a percentage of the total, 65.5% of commercial alarm users had no false alarms in 2006, which is up from 64.6% in 2005. Keep in mind that when viewing any of the statistical data in this report, it is important to look at those numbers in relation to the total number of alarm users. Since 1995, 153.0% more commercial alarm users were able to remain within the zero false alarm threshold.

Chart 11
Commercial Alarm Users With Specific Numbers of False Alarms

# of False Alarms	1995	1998	2000	2002	2004	2005	2006	% Change (05-06)	% Base Change (95-06)
0	2352	5412	5457	5739	5356	5730	5951	+3.8%	+153.0%
1	4697	3936	4134	3760	3432	3145	3132	-.04%	-33.3%
2	2699	2290	2474	2098	1730	1502	1497	-.03%	-44.5%
3	1435	1335	1433	1169	957	853	816	-4.3	-43.1%
4	1113	789	861	697	560	473	478	+1.0%	-57.0%
5	763	478	527	409	360	305	287	-5.9%	-62.4%
6	490	286	332	274	239	186	193	+3.8%	-60.6%
7	331	183	216	171	158	121	136	+12.4%	-58.9%
8	217	119	141	115	108	85	95	+11.8%	-56.2%
9	145	80	99	78	68	63	74	+17.5%	-49.0%
10	109	58	68	45	48	43	54	+25.6%	-50.4%
11	75	37	46	32	35	30	39	+30.0%	-48.0%
12	49	27	32	24	23	21	33	+57.1%	-32.6%
13	35	19	26	17	14	16	22	+37.5%	-37.1%
14	30	11	20	12	8	13	18	+38.5%	-40.0%
15	24	8	14	9	7	8	16	+50.0%	-33.3%
16	18	3	7	8	5	8	12	+50.0%	-33.3%
17	11	3	7	7	5	7	7	0	-36.3%
18	11	2	6	7	4	6	5	-20.0%	-54.5%
19	8	2	3	3	2	6	4	-33.3%	-50.0%
20	5	0	1	2	2	4	2	-50.0%	-60.0%
21	5	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	-80.0%
22	4	0	1	0	1	0	1	+100%	-75.0%
23	2	0	1	0	1	0	1	+100%	-50.0%
24	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	+100%	-50.0%
25	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	-100%
26	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-100%
27	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-100%
28	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-100%
29	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-100%

In analyzing those alarm users, who experienced 15 or more false alarms in 2006, 11 of them represent one particular type of commercial alarm user. Seven of the 11 represent the same user at different locations. FARS staff has been working with all 11 to determine the problems and recommend solutions. We will continue to work with these alarm users until their issues have been resolved.

The total number of alarm users, who had no false alarms from 2005 to 2006, rose by 2.8%. As a percentage of the total, a full 81.6% of residential and commercial alarm users combined had no false alarms in 2006. Keep in mind that when viewing any of the statistical data in this report, it is important to look at those numbers in relation to the total number of alarm users. Since 1995, 167.5% more residential and commercial alarm users combined are able to remain within the zero false alarm threshold.

Chart 12
Both Residential and Commercial Alarm Users With Specific Numbers of False Alarms

# of False Alarms	1995	1998	2000	2002	2004	2005	2006	% Change (05-06)	% Base Change (95-06)
0	20468	39358	45684	52077	51454	53240	54753	+2.8%	+167.5%
1	15968	14817	15650	14448	12294	10730	10082	-6.0%	-36.9%
2	6852	5669	5869	4848	3470	2894	2799	-3.3%	-59.1%
3	2606	2347	2378	1833	1378	1180	1085	-8.0%	-58.4%
4	1781	1098	1112	881	658	572	542	-5.2%	-69.6%
5	1055	584	618	463	382	335	304	-9.2%	-48.6%
6	618	326	362	288	244	198	199	+0.5%	-67.8%
7	381	198	227	173	161	124	137	+10.5%	-64.0%
8	236	125	144	116	110	86	96	+11.6%	-59.3%
9	154	82	99	78	69	63	75	+19.0%	-51.3%
10	116	59	68	45	49	43	55	+27.9%	-52.6%
11	81	37	46	32	36	30	40	+33.3%	-50.6%
12	52	27	32	24	23	21	34	+61.2%	-34.6%
13	36	19	26	17	14	16	23	+43.7%	-36.1%
14	32	11	20	12	8	13	18	+38.5%	-40.0%
15	26	8	14	9	7	8	16	+50.0%	-33.3%
16	19	3	7	8	5	8	12	+50.0%	-33.3%
17	11	3	7	7	5	7	7	0	-36.3%
18	11	2	6	7	4	6	5	-20.0%	-54.5%
19	8	2	3	3	2	6	4	-33.3%	-50.0%
20	5	0	1	2	2	4	2	-50.0%	-60.0%
21	5	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	-80.0%
22	4	0	1	0	1	0	1	+100%	-75.0%
23	2	0	1	0	1	0	1	+100%	-50.0%
24	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	+100%	-50.0%
25	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	-100%
26	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-100%
27	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-100%
28	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-100%
29	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-100%

Major Accomplishments

Credit Card Processing

In an effort to better serve our customers, the FARS instituted credit card processing for all types of payments due; i.e., alarm business license, alarm user registration, false alarm response fees, renewal registration, appeal filing fees and civil citations. This has met with great success and has allowed alarm users and alarm companies to pay outstanding fees due with a simple telephone call to the FARS office. New policies and procedures were created to handle credit card processing, including authorizations and audit trails. All staff have been fully trained on the appropriate policies and procedures to follow and have been given the authority to process credit card payments.

The FARS received one charge-back request from an alarm user, who claimed that he did not authorize the charge. FARS staff worked with the credit card company, provided undisputable evidence that the charge was, in fact, authorized, and subsequently received full payment.

Training

Regional Public Safety Users Group

Jurisdictions throughout the country are dealing with the false alarm issue. In the Washington-Metropolitan area, there are numerous jurisdictions, both county and city, that either have existing alarm laws, are looking to enhance what they currently have, or are looking to enact new legislation to deal with the tremendous drain on resources that false alarms cause. With that in mind, several alarm coordinators from neighboring jurisdictions, including Montgomery County, started talking informally about creating regional meetings, where we meet as a group to discuss areas of mutual concern.

The regional meetings have been a tremendous success. Meetings are held every two months, with a different jurisdiction hosting each time. There are a total of 14 different jurisdictions that currently participate. We worked on trying to get two different pieces of legislation through the Maryland General Assembly in 2006. One was a statewide bill requiring the use of Enhanced Call Verification, which requires an alarm company to make two separate telephone calls, one to the site and one to a responsible party's cell phone, *prior* to requesting public safety dispatch. (Virginia already has this in their state code.) The other statewide bill dealt with a minimum training requirement for alarm technicians, which does not currently exist in the Maryland licensing law. While we were not successful in 2006 in achieving our goals, the group continued to work on these issues throughout the year and met with state legislators to facilitate bringing at least the Enhanced Call Verification bill back before the General Assembly in 2007. Having all of the jurisdictions interested in false alarm reduction at the table at one time enhances our ability to be successful for the good of us all.

Some other highlights of the Regional Public Safety Users Group include:

- creation of a matrix that contains a synopsis of all alarm laws in the State of Maryland, which was provided to the alarm industry
- obtaining point of contact information for various problem alarm user accounts, which exist in each jurisdiction
- development of better working relationships with the Maryland Burglar and Fire Alarm Association
- access to MDBFAA technician training courses free of charge to public safety members
- False Alarm Prevention Month initiatives
- joint meetings with MDBFAA members to discuss a universal permit/registration form and other areas of mutual concern

Alarm Technician Training – Maryland Burglar and Fire Alarm Association

The Maryland Burglar and Fire Alarm Association (MDBFAA) created an alarm technician training course, which meets or exceeds the requirements of the National Burglar and Fire Alarm Association’s technician training course. The MDBFAA made this training available to alarm coordinators and their staff throughout the Washington-Metropolitan area for first time in May 2006 at no cost. Almost 10 different public safety employees took the training course. FARS Director Norma Beaubien attended the course and successfully passed the strenuous exam after a full two-day course. She has now attained alarm technician certification at both the national and local levels. All other FARS staff will be taking the course and exam at a future date.

“How to Implement Your Successful Solution to False Alarms”

As members of the False Alarm Reduction Association (FARA), FARS staff have the opportunity to work with members of the law enforcement community on an international basis. One of the most recent, and perhaps most significant, endeavors of the FARA was to create a training program, where certified instructors travel throughout North America to provide training on the “nuts and bolts” of alarm management programs. FARS Director, Norma Beaubien, has been certified as one of the instructors for this intensive 2-day training course, and helped to co-author the entire program. Ms. Beaubien conducted two extremely successful training courses in Brampton, Ontario, Canada and Overland Park, Kansas in 2006.

The interactive training course modules on evaluating the extent of the problem; justification for developing a false alarm reduction program; causes and solutions; benefits of alarm management; design, adoption, implementation and funding of a program; communication; and evaluation. The Montgomery County false alarm reduction program is featured throughout the training course as one approach to managing false alarms, which has shown extraordinary results. The goal of the training is to provide law enforcement and the industry with a forum to develop positive working relationships and gain a greater understanding of what is possible.

Emergency Communications Center

The first point of contact with the Police Department when attempting to request dispatch to an alarm activation is with the Emergency Communications Center (ECC). While police officers only responded to 15,652 requests for dispatch in 2006, the ECC telecommunicators and dispatchers handled all 36,751 attempts to dispatch. It is critical that ECC personnel obtain specific training to handle these types of calls and gain a greater understanding of why we do what we do and how it will impact them in their new positions. For the past six years, FARS staff have provided specialized training to all new ECC recruits as part of their overall training. The training includes an overview of the alarm law and executive regulation, why the law and regulation were enacted, the scope of the problem, ECC and FARS standard operating procedures, review of actual calls and what was done correctly or incorrectly, and discussion of the successes of the false alarm reduction program. Several current FARS staff have served as trainers for the ECC recruit classes, and found them to be extremely worthwhile in helping to ensure a cohesive approach within the Police Department to the alarm management issue.

FARS Office Full-Staffed

For the first time in almost three years, the FARS reached its full employee complement by hiring a new Office Services Coordinator. Because there are only four full-time employees in the FARS, it is very difficult to perform the day-to-day operations, develop outreach programs for alarm users and alarm companies, and create new initiatives when the FARS is short-staffed. Having a full staff enables the FARS to move forward with our false alarm reduction efforts, provide exemplary service to our customers, and implement new initiatives.

Major Offender Program

The Major Offender Program was, once again, successful in reaching out to those alarm users that incurred the most false alarms in 2006. FARS staff identified and worked with 58 different alarm users, who were experiencing false alarm problems. Through the FARS's supportive intervention, 18 of those 58 were successful in drastically reducing or eliminating their false alarms. One segment of our commercial alarm user base accounted for most of the other 40 alarm users, which is described in more detail previously in this report. Many of those 40 alarm users, who still appear on our major offender list, have improved their alarm usage, but are still considered major offenders due to the large number of false alarms each experienced. FARS staff is continuing to work with these users to further identify problems and suggest solutions. Additionally, staff began a more aggressive campaign to reach problem alarm users by making cold calls and speaking with management on site. This approach was highly successful and will be continued in 2007.

Alarm Users Held Accountable for Required System Upgrades

As part of the FARS's Major Offender Project, we also began holding alarm users responsible for obtaining the alarm system upgrades required upon the sixth false alarm in a calendar year. While we have always required the upgrade, due to being short-staffed, we were

previously unable to institute the enforcement mechanism provided in law. Chapter 3A, Alarms, of the Montgomery County Code requires alarm users to upgrade their alarm system to current county installation standards upon the sixth false alarm in a calendar year. Failure to perform the upgrade can result in the issuance of a Class B \$100 civil citation. FARS staff developed an initiative to garner greater compliance with this provision of the statute. An initial letter is sent to alarm users when they have their sixth false alarm giving 21 days to have the upgrade performed and a signed upgrade certificate submitted to the FARS. If no upgrade is received within the 21-day time period, a second letter is sent advising that a civil citation would be issued should the certificate not be forthcoming. A total of 105 letters were sent to residential and commercial alarm users. As a result of that second letter, 44 upgrade certificates were received. An additional 30 alarm users had no further false alarms for the entire year after the second contact by the FARS. Eleven civil citations were issued; five were paid and six are still pending.

Enforcement

FARS staff continued its efforts to garner greater compliance by alarm companies through the issuance of Class A civil citations for violations of Chapter 3A, Alarms. A total of 22 civil citations were issued for failure to cease requesting dispatch on customers in a violation status and not providing the legally mandated information when requesting dispatch. Last year, 24 of the 31 total citations that were issued went to one national company. That same company in 2006 received only seven citations, which shows an incredible improvement over previous years. Each year, we are required to issue fewer and fewer civil citations to ensure compliance with the alarm law, which demonstrates a positive movement toward conformity. The number of citations required in 2006 for violations was down again from 106 in 2001, 87 in 2002, 49 in 2003, 48 in 2004, 31 in 2005 and 22 in 2006. This shows that most alarm companies are complying with the provisions of the alarm law, and our goal is to have zero circumstances in which the imposition of civil citations are necessary.

Collection Efforts

When an alarm user fails to pay a false alarm response fee, the FARS advises the alarm user's alarm company that it may no longer request dispatch for that user and refers the account to the Office of the County Attorney for collection action. In 2006, the FARS referred 505 different alarm user accounts to the Office of the County Attorney for collection of outstanding/delinquent fees that totaled \$73,475. While the number of different alarm users who were referred for collection action in 2006 rose slightly, the total monies that were the subject of collection were reduced from \$124,604 to \$73,475.

Additionally, the Office of the County Attorney files suit in District Court against those alarm users, who do not pay their response fees despite both the FARS and the County Attorney's Office best collection efforts. A total of 152 suits were filed in District Court in 2006, with 132 of those alarm users paying all fees due prior to the trial date.