

Response-Ability

More Arrests, Greater Safety, Lower Costs

Encouraging video alarm systems by updating dispatch policy is making sheriffs more efficient and delivering more arrests. New generations of video intrusion alarms are changing the way sheriffs respond to alarm calls. For those not familiar with the term, *Enhanced Video Alarm* is a generic category where the alarm system delivers a short video clip to the central station which confirms the presence of an intruder. This is not surveillance, but an incremental step in the detect/notify process that alarm companies have been doing for decades. The enhancement is that in addition to the standard alarm signal, the central station operator sees a video of what caused the alarm and calls the 911 Dispatch Center as a virtual eyewitness. These new alarms are available from many manufacturers using at least three different technologies to deliver compelling results in terms of arrests.

Video alarms made national news this year when CBS Evening News with Katie Couric covered how 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. The crime spree was making a big impact in the community. Deputy Jon Thompson from



Deputy Jon Thompson and Michael Honig

Napa County explains that as things got worse, Texana Security installed a cordless/wireless video alarm system in Michael Honig's winery, whose 800 solar panels had been hit multiple times. "Within a week, the monitoring station called dispatch saying that they saw a hand being placed over one of the MotionViewers and three people in the shadows. We responded immediately and made the arrests that stopped the crime wave." This isn't the only success. One system installed in Arizona was responsible for over 40 arrests in 4 months. Detroit installed systems in 30 school buildings last August and made over 45 arrests in the month of September. As the



arrests grew, the Detroit Deputy Chief lined up all his officers and said, “When these alarms come in, you roll because there is somebody there.” These results have not gone unnoticed and in areas like Greater Boston, the major 911 Dispatch Centers are creating a special dispatch code with higher priority for enhanced video alarms.

Technology advances in the last few years mean these new enhanced video alarm systems cost about the same as the older “blind” systems and are now affordable for both small business and residential consumers. In addition, there are also new outdoor cordless/ wireless versions like those used in Napa Valley that can be mounted on a pipe in a bucket for portability. These systems actually transmit the alarm and video over wireless networks for immediate review of the video – making it possible to protect an anhydrous tank left in the middle of a field or assets in a remote fenced lot.



Because of the advantages of video, Law Enforcement response is more efficient as assets are focused where they are needed most and where they are most likely to make an arrest. Security companies are now working together with sheriffs to encourage consumers to embrace these video alarms by adopting a formal policy at their 911 Dispatch Center giving higher priority response to enhanced video alarms. The key is that Priority Response is a win for all security stakeholders. Law Enforcement gets more arrests, greater officer safety and more efficiency. Consumers have greater protection and life-safety and the industry can provide better confirmation of their alarms.

Sheriff Paul Fitzgerald, Second Vice President of the NSA, first saw these new alarms when he attended the security industry’s CSAA (Central Station Alarm Association) conference last year. The industry was looking to build stronger partnerships with Law Enforcement and reached out to the sheriffs and the NSA leadership. As a result of that meeting, local Iowa security companies PerMar and Security Equipment Inc. collaborated with Sheriff Fitzgerald to provide loaner systems of the new video alarms to the Iowa LEIN (Law Enforcement Intelligence Network) in an effort to educate local

law enforcement and strengthen ties between them fighting crime. The LEIN works with law enforcement across Iowa providing technology solutions on a temporary basis to help their deputies in their local investigations. LEIN is also encouraging Iowa's sheriffs to move towards priority response to enhanced video alarms as an official policy.

Sheriff Ken Campbell of Boone County, Indiana, saw the new video alarm systems while attending the winter conference of the NSA held in Washington, DC. Four different committees at the Winter Conference actually heard presentations of the benefits of changing dispatch policy to prioritize enhanced video alarms. Returning to Indiana, he spoke to his Deputy, Mike Beard, asking him to review the new systems and see if they would be useful. This eventually led to Steve Luce, the executive director of the Indiana Sheriffs Association, working with local Indiana alarm companies to encourage the concept of Priority Response to Enhanced Video Alarms in Indiana. As part of this effort, Koorsen Security of Indianapolis has loaned systems to Sheriff Campbell and other local sheriffs to help their investigators resolve crimes.

A similar situation is happening in Alabama. Calhoun County Sheriff Larry Amerson, Third Vice President of the NSA, saw the new technology at the Winter Conference while walking the exhibit hall and asked for a presentation to his staff. False alarms had become an increasing source of frustration and a growing drain on Calhoun County resources. His office was already working on ways to motivate their citizens to minimize false alarms to improve efficiencies and the benefits of the new video alarms were obvious. In a proactive effort to move this direction, Sheriff Amerson is working to encourage the benefits of video alarms and wrote an open letter with the following excerpt:

“While Calhoun County Sheriff’s Deputies will continue our current policy of responding immediately to all intrusion alarms, we believe that enhanced video alarms offer enhanced protection to you and help us in our efforts to keep Calhoun County citizens safe and protect their property. We believe that the delivery of a video of the specific event that triggered the alarm is a tremendous improvement in alarm technology that will lead to a reduction in false alarms saving valuable budget dollars. While we are not endorsing a specific provider or brand of product, we support the efforts of the security industry to provide their

customers with the best protection possible and we look forward to being able to use enhanced video alarms to improve the life safety of our county.”

Affordable video alarms have the potential to increase arrests, save cost, and make alarm response more efficient. There will be a workshop on *Priority Response and Enhance Video Alarms* at the upcoming Annual Conference in Anaheim with a live demonstration of the technology and presentation of case studies of how the security industry is using these new video alarms to strengthen local law enforcement and improve community life safety. The goal is that as the installed base of alarm systems includes more video, the industry would have greater confirmation of actual intrusions and the deputies would make more arrests.



Video Snapshots from Actual Incidents

For more information: www.enhancedvideoalarm.info

To see the CBS News story on the Napa County incident visit:
<http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=6312603n>