New Leadership
TBFAA Welcomes New Private Security Board

Chism to Chair
Crenshaw, Smith & Davis Washington Join Board

A Look Back
Craig & Samulin Made A True Contribution

Charlie Crenshaw at the 2007 TBFAA Convention
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ANALOG CELL-PHONE NETWORK
GOING OFF AIR

DO YOU KNOW YOUR ALARM FACTOR

JOIN US IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY

INTERNET USAGE BASED BILLING TESTED

PLAN YOUR ESTATE NOW

COMPUTER TIP-
NEW MICROSOFT FILE TYPES
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Texas Burglar and Fire Alarm Association, Inc., [TBFAA] is a non-profit organization of security professionals who have joined together to enrich the industry by providing membership training and representing the membership as a whole in the Texas Legislature, the Texas Private Security Board and the Texas Fire Marshal’s Office among many other programs.

The TRANSMITTER is published by the Texas Burglar and Fire Alarm Association, a Texas not for profit association.

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Advertising Information
Brad Shipp 877-908-2322

www.TBFAA.org
We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.
-Sir Winston Churchill

The transitions at the Private Security Board are great examples of selflessness that so many give to help the rest of us. Mike Samulin and George Craig have served for years in the thankless task of balancing the needs of Texas citizens against the inevitable burden of regulation. They have consistently found a reasonable way to implement the law by educating bureau staff and industry to focus on the offender rather than the compliant. Knowing Charlie Crenshaw as I do, I know he will do his utmost to follow their lead.

Our industry is fortunate that we have so many who dedicate so much time for the greater good. The payoff for these kind souls is certainly not tangible or monetary, but I agree with Churchill that it can be very fulfilling. If there is any fairness in life, Mike, George and now Charlie are certainly ahead in the game because of their efforts.

PS: I hope you have noticed the new Transmitter format and use it as an opportunity to ask a vendor to advertise or to ask a fellow dealer if they receive and read it each month.

Chris Russell, President
email: president@tbfaa.org

Message from the President

Statewide view Calendar

**FEBRUARY**

05-10  TX Locksmiths Assn- Austin
07-08  Fire Prep Class- San Antonio
07    HGCAA Membership Party- Houston
12    STAA Membership Meeting- San Antonio
18    President’s Day- Holiday
20    NTAA CEU Training- Dallas
21    TXBFAA Board Meeting- Dallas
21    NTAA Membership Meeting- Dallas
26    Central Texas Chapter Meeting- Austin
28-29  Level 1- Dallas

**MARCH**

09    HGCAA Membership Meeting- Houston
13    STAA Membership Meeting- San Antonio
13-17 NSCA Expo- Orlando
15    NTAA Membership Meeting- Dallas
16    Fire Prep Class- Houston
21    NTAA CEU Training- Dallas
22-23 Level 1- San Antonio
27    NESA Annual Meeting- Las Vegas
27    Central Texas Chapter Meeting- Austin
28-30 ISC West- Las Vegas
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Meetings/Contact Information</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Houston Gulf Coast Association</td>
<td>281.859.4569</td>
<td>Meets 2nd Thursday of the month 11:30 am - 1:00 pm at Cadillac Bar and Grill, Shepard @ I-10 POC: Brian McKinney p: 713.983.0182 e: <a href="mailto:isgbrian@aol.com">isgbrian@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Texas Alarm Association</td>
<td>214.352.9352</td>
<td>3rd Thursday of each month. Check website for locations and times POC: David Simon p: 972.871.3778 e: <a href="mailto:dave.simon@brinks.com">dave.simon@brinks.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Texas Alarm Association</td>
<td>210.402.6262</td>
<td>Meets 2nd Tuesday of the month. Check website for locations and times POC: Bob Vallance p: 210.659.6751 e: <a href="mailto:bob2@vallance.com">bob2@vallance.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Texas Chapter</td>
<td>877.908.2322</td>
<td>Meets the 4th Tuesday of the month except Oct &amp; Dec at 11:30 am 9070 Research Blvd., Suite 101, Austin, TX- SW corner of Hwy 183 &amp; Burnet Rd at the Crossroads Shopping Center POC: Jeff Bright p: 512.845.1460 e: <a href="mailto:jbright@brightsecuritygroup.com">jbright@brightsecuritygroup.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast Texas Chapter</td>
<td>877.908.2322</td>
<td>Meets quarterly in Longview Area. Plus local meetings will be held in various cities. Check website for times and locations. POC: Patrick Craven p: 903.792.7262 e: <a href="mailto:pacraven@cableone.net">pacraven@cableone.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Electronic Security Alliance</td>
<td>301.519.9237</td>
<td>NESA is a federation of state associations, including TBFAA, established to serve and promote the electronic systems industry at the direction of, and through its affiliated state associations. POC: Rex Adams p: 972.437.1213 e: <a href="mailto:radams@asdsecurity.com">radams@asdsecurity.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False Alarm Reduction Association</td>
<td>301.519.9237</td>
<td>FARA an association of persons working public safety False Alarm Reduction Units that exchanges information, influences legislation and establishes relationships and partnerships with other groups interested in false alarm reduction. TBFAA is an associate member of FARA. POC: Brad Shipp p: 301.519.9237 e: <a href="mailto:info@faraonline.org">info@faraonline.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Computer Tip

Microsoft Office Files Use New Format

By: Brad Shipp, TBFAA

Documents created in Microsoft Office 2007 have an "x" at the end of the usual ".doc", ".xls" or "ppt" file-name extension. Office 2007’s new, more efficient file formats, can not be read in older Office releases without a free update from Microsoft.

To get that add-on, go to http://microsoft.com/office and type "Microsoft Office Compatibility Pack" in the search form. Downloading and installing it will enable Office 2000, XP and 2003 to read and write the 2007 formats.

If you use a Mac, Microsoft’s Office 2008 supports the new formats, and a free file converter for Office v.x and 2004 is available at http://microsoft.com/mac/downloads.
AUSTIN – Gov. Rick Perry appointed three members to the Texas Private Security Board. He also named John Chism of Irving as presiding officer for a term to expire at the pleasure of the governor. The board licenses private investigation, security guard, burglar alarm, courier, armored car and access control companies. It also approves training schools for security officers and instructors.

**John Chism** is a State of Texas Licensed Private Investigator and owner of John Chism Investigations. He is a member of the International Intelligence Investigators Association, National Association of Licensed Investigators, Texas Association of Licensed Investigators, and is a life member of the International Police Association and Dallas Police Association. Chism is also on the National Council of Investigative and Security Specialists legislative committee. He has served on the board of directors of the Irving Youth Council and volunteers with the Irving Police Department. Chism served in the United States Army as a Security Platoon Leader. He received his associate's degree in Criminal Justice from El Centro College in Dallas. He also completed courses of study at the University of Illinois in Chicago, and Office of International Justice and The Center for American and International Law in Dallas. Chism replaces George Craig of Corpus Christi as presiding officer of the board.

**Mark Smith** of Dallas is president and owner of Smith Protective Services Inc., a private security provider, and is responsible for oversight of all company operations and personnel. He is regional treasurer and life member of ASSIST and is licensed by the Texas Polygraph Examiners Board. He received a bachelor's degree from Southern Methodist University and completed a prescribed course of training from Texas A&M University Polygraph Examiner School. He replaces George Craig of Corpus Christi. His term expires Jan. 31, 2011.

**Charles Crenshaw** of Austin is president and owner of Crenshaw Alarm and Signal Corporation, a full service security alarm system provider. He is treasurer of the Texas Burglar and Fire Alarm Association and director of the Central Texas Burglar and Fire Alarm Association. Crenshaw attended the University of Texas. He replaces Michael Samulin of San Antonio. His term expires Jan. 31, 2013.

**Doris Davis Washington** of Arlington is a real estate broker and owner of Doris Davis Realtors. She is past chairman of the Arlington Board of Realtors, past president of the Fort Worth Association of Real Estate Brokers, and board member of the Texas Association of Real Estate Brokers. Additionally, she is a member of the Tarrant County College Advisory Committee and board member of the Mount Olive Baptist Church Federal Credit Union. Washington received an associate's degree from Tarrant County Junior College. She replaces Linda Sadler of Lubbock. Her term expires Jan. 31, 2013.
Meet Charles Crenshaw
By: Brad Shipp, TBFAA

Charles “Charlie” Crenshaw is a long time member of the TBFAA who has recently served as Treasurer and was instrumental in the formation of the Central Texas Chapter.

Charlie resigned his position on the TBFAA board when his appointment to the Private Security Board became official. The TBFAA Board will fill the vacancy under the bylaws as soon as possible.

The letter from TBFAA President, Chris Russell that endorsed Charlie for the board position said it well. “Mr. Crenshaw’s day to day experience, as an owner of Crenshaw Alarm and Signal Corporation in Austin, will bring the needed perspective of an alarm company owner to the board’s deliberations. While Mr. Crenshaw currently owns his own company, he previously gained extensive experience as a regional manager of ADT branches and as a Vice President of Smith Alarms. This varied background from his 32 years in the industry gives him the ability to identify how issues impact large and small companies alike. Mr. Crenshaw is a native of Texas, who attended the University of Texas, has served admirably on the TBFAA board of directors for the past few years and has shown a desire to ensure that all perspectives are heard and that issues are dealt with fairly. He has been instrumental in forming a new chapter of our association in the Austin area and has reached out to dealers to get them involved and aware of issues that impact them.”

When he heard that Charlie’s appointment was official President Russell said, “It is a rare individual that can serve fairly and effectively on the PSB Board. It is even more rare to find someone that is both worthy and willing. A big congratulation and thank you goes out to Charlie for his new appointment.”
The Private Security Bureau was created in 1969 as the Texas Board of Private Investigators and Private Security Agency. In 1998, the agency was renamed the Texas Commission on Private Security. This entity became associated with the Texas Department of Public Safety in September 2003, and was abolished and reestablished as the Department’s Private Security Bureau in February 2004.

The Private Security Board adopts rules and general policies to determine the qualifications of license holders, registrants, and commissioned security officers; investigate alleged violations of this chapter and of commission rules; establish and enforce standards governing the safety and conduct of each person licensed, registered, or commissioned under the Private Security Act.

During FY 2006, PSB resolved almost 100% of its documented complaints within six months and conducted 7,718 investigations. Additionally, the average time for case resolution in FY 2006 was 28.5 days. PSB issued 25,935 new licenses to individuals, with an average cost of $11.06 and 19,970 new licenses to businesses, with an average cost of $130.71.

By the Numbers

Total Number of Individuals Licensed - 123,615
Total Number of Business Facilities Licensed 4,721
Count of Active Individual Licenses License Types
Alarm Installer 5,283
Alarm Monitor 130
Alarm Sales Person 2,872
Alarm Salesperson 514
Alarm System Monitor 2,761
Electronic Access Control Device Installer 698

Returning Members Complete the Board

Harold Warren of Austin served in criminal investigations for the Internal Revenue Service for 23 years. He is a member of the Internal Revenue Service Retired Special Agents, is an associate member of the Certified Fraud Examiners and a past member of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Officers. Warren received a bachelor’s degree from Metropolitan State College in Colorado. His term will expire Jan. 31, 2009.

Howard H. Johnsen is chairman and CEO of Hans Johnsen Company. He is director and former chairman of the Visiting Nurse Association of Texas. Johnsen is past president and director of Security Hardware Distributing and the Bicycle Product Suppliers Association. He received a bachelor’s degree from the University of Texas. His term will expire Jan. 31, 2011.

Stella Caldera is president and CEO of Etoile, Inc. She serves on the advisory board of Comerica Bank, the Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic Chamber of Entrepreneurs, and Hispanics for Opportunity and Progress in Education. Caldera is also a member of the Latino Coalition, the Houston International Group and Hispanic Women in Leadership. She serves as sergeant-of-arms of the League of United Latin American Citizens’ Educational Council 402 and was awarded the Triunfando Award for 2003 as the Hispanic Female Entrepreneur of the Year. Caldera is a graduate of Glassell School of Fine Arts. Her term will expire Jan. 31, 2011.
The TBFAA is looking into the possibility of forming another Local Chapter in the Rio Grande Valley. This area has historically had very little representation in the TBFAA, and a Local Chapter will ensure that the Rio Grande Valley has input directly to the TBFAA Board of Directors.

The initial meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 27 at La Casa Del Taco restaurant, located at 2708 N. Texas Blvd. Weslaco, TX 78596 and start at 11:30AM.

We will be discussing the benefits of a Local Chapter, and as an added bonus, Rodney Hooker will be presenting a 1 hour CEU on Law and Rule changes that have occurred since the last legislative session.

Mr. Thomas Beare of ASG Security is helping with the logistics and planning of this initial meeting, and his help is greatly appreciated by all involved.

If you are interested in attending, please contact Rodney Hooker at 866-491-3400 or Tracey Ritchie at 877-431-5562.

By: Rodney Hooker, TBFAA
George B. Craig, was appointed chairman in Dec. 09, 2003. His term expired Jan. 31, 2007. George is president of SureCo, Inc., a contract security business. He is an active member of ASSIST, ASIS International, the TBFAA and the TALI and serves as director of the Arthritis Foundation of Corpus Christi. He served in the United States Navy Reserves as a communications expert from 1969 to 1972. Craig received a bachelor’s degree from Southern Methodist University in Dallas and a law degree from South Texas College of Law in Houston.


Mike is a member of South Texas Alarm Association, the National Burglar and Fire Alarm Association, the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce. He has served twice as President of the Greater San Antonio Alarm Association, Regional Director of the Texas Burglar and Fire Alarm Association and as Vice President of the Texas Burglar and Fire Alarm Association.

In an interview with the Transmitter, Mike indicated that “working with our industry and all of the involved industries on the board has been the highlight of my industry career”.

Mike identified implementing the transition into the Department of Public Safety and smoothing the succession by Capt. Hinajosa from long term Executive Director Cliff Grumbles as major events during his terms. Mike also indicated that finding the right balance in enforcement has been a recurring challenge. “When I first joined the board the agency had 9 to 11 investigators, over time that number went down to 4.” Mike indicated the most common complaint at that time was about unlicensed activity. “When we came under DPS, Chairman Craig and I spent a lot of time educating new investigators about the importance of not penalizing companies that were trying to comply. We both stressed the need to focus on unlicensed activity.”

When asked for advice to the new board Mike said, “The board needs to continue to work with the industry associations to fine tune the rules to make sure that the agency stays on course. The role of the board is to make sure the citizens are served first and remember that industry members are also citizens.”

TBFAA past President Chip Bird said “Mike did an outstanding job representing the burglar alarm industry and the citizens of Texas. He was an integral part of the agencies transition to DPS and helping the TBFAA forge a great relationship with them. Mike always made himself available to me and to the TBFAA and was very unselfish of his time.”
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Be a big fish.
As I speak with Alarm Industry owners I often hear, "Frank, my business is my retirement." But if you don't make it to retirement you should consider Estate Planning for the transition of assets to your family.

Where do you begin? Consider developing an estate planning "check list." Here's one to consider:

- **Assemble your estate-planning team** - Your estate-planning team can include an investment professional, an attorney, a tax professional, an insurance consultant, and you. Use this team to help you complete the following steps.

- **Identify your objectives** - Your first step is to set out some broad goals, such as these:
  - Distribute assets fairly to your family members
  - Designate someone to handle your financial affairs if you become incapacitated
  - Support charitable, religious or educational institutions
  - Name a guardian to take care of your minor children, should you and your spouse die prematurely

- **Create a list of all your assets** - You'll need an accurate list of all the assets you own, as well as the registration of these assets and any beneficiary designations associated with them. Ask your financial advisor or attorney if he or she can provide a document that will help in organizing this information.

- **Create the legal papers you'll need** - Estate planning can involve a variety of legal documents. Here are some of the most common ones:
  - Will - Insures that your assets transfer in the manner that you choose.
  - Revocable living trust - Assists in distributing assets to beneficiaries, protecting assets, carrying out your wishes if you become incapacitated and minimizing estate taxes.
  - Durable power of attorney - Names someone to make financial and health care decisions on your behalf should you become unable to do so.
  - Health care directive/living will - Provides evidence of your wishes regarding the administering of life-prolonging procedures when you are no longer able to communicate.

- **Estimate estate taxes** - Your taxable estate consists of the value of your gross estate - including your savings, investments, real estate, insurance policies, retirement plans, etc. - less any deductions. In 2006 through 2008, you can pass along up to $2 million of your estate, free of federal estate taxes, to your heirs. This estate tax exclusion rises gradually over the next several years.

- **Explore ways to reduce estate taxes** - Here are a few widely used strategies for lowering estate taxes:
  - Gifting - You can give up to $12,000 per year, to as many people as you choose, free of gift taxes.
  - Establish "bypass trust" - When created, your assets will "detour" past your surviving spouse's taxable estate - so you may protect up to $4 million in assets ($2 million each in estate tax exclusions) from estate taxes. This figure will rise as the exclusion increases.
  - Create "irrevocable life insurance trust" - By putting your life insurance policies into an irrevocable trust, you can avoid estate taxes on the proceeds - which could be a considerable part of your taxable estate.

- **Appoint a qualified individual or professional to manage your estate** - You'll need to choose someone who will have the experience, knowledge, time and desire to carry out your wishes and handle your financial affairs.

**Get started soon** - In a real sense, your estate plan sums up the most important chapters in your life - and you'll want this story to have a happy ending. So, start the estate planning process soon.
## 2008 Training Schedule

### Level One

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<tr>
<th>Month</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Jan 24-25</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Feb 28-29</td>
<td>Dallas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 27-28</td>
<td>San Antonio</td>
<td>Apr 17-18</td>
<td>El Paso</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 15-16</td>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>Jun 26-27</td>
<td>Austin</td>
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<td>Jul 10-11</td>
<td>Amarillo</td>
<td>Aug 28-29</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 25-26</td>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>Oct 02-03</td>
<td>El Paso</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 06-07</td>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>Dec 11-12</td>
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### Fire Prep

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<tr>
<td>Jan 18</td>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>Feb 08</td>
<td>San Antonio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 07</td>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>Apr 10-11</td>
<td>Dallas</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 08-09</td>
<td>San Antonio</td>
<td>Jun 19-20</td>
<td>Houston</td>
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<td>Dallas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 13-14</td>
<td>San Antonio</td>
<td>Dec 04-05</td>
<td>Houston</td>
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For more class offerings, information and additional dates, visit www.TBFAA.org or call 877-908-2322.

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Company Says It Will Try New Billing
With Subscribers In Beaumont, Texas

Time Warner Cable Inc has confirmed to Reuters that it is planning a trial later this year in Beaumont, Texas to bill high-speed Internet subscribers based on their amount of usage rather than a flat fee, the standard industry practice. Reuters reports that Time Warner Cable, which has 7.4 million residential Internet subscribers, is hoping the move will not confuse consumers if introduced nationwide and is planning a trial period.

A company spokesman told Reuters that, it believes the billing system will impact only heavy users, who account for around 5 percent of all customers but typically use more than half of the total network bandwidth. They also cite the popularity of downloading video and music as a problem that they need to address.

The news about Time Warner’s plan, which broke from a leaked internal memo, has generated lots of comment in technology sites and blogs.

While utility bills such as the phone or electricity have traditionally been based on usage, U.S. high-speed Internet subscribers have come to expect a fixed monthly charge. An Internet bill typically only varies based on the speed of the consumer’s Internet access. Other cable operators may follow Time Warner Cable’s lead and phone companies such as Verizon Communications Inc and AT&T Inc are likely to be watching the New York-based cable operator’s plans.

Comcast Corp has been accused by consumer groups of blocking Web traffic moving across its networks, prompting a January notice of inquiry by the Federal Communications Commission. Comcast denies it blocks any Internet traffic saying it uses bandwidth management technology to help improve the customer experience but which may slow down some file transfers.

The Washington Post reports that, Bell Canada, which meters service in some plans, charges customers who go over the limit $7.50 per additional gigabyte. (The Canadian dollar is worth about as much as the U.S. version these days.) That would jack up the $2.99 iTunes rental fee for "The Magnificent Seven" by 10 bucks. A high-def movie, typically 4 gigs, could cost you $30 more. (Bell Canada offers an Unlimited Usage Insurance Plan for $25 a month.)
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Starting February 19, 2008, cell phone carriers, including AT&T, Alltel and Verizon Wireless, will be turning off their analog networks. Alltel will take more time than Verizon and AT&T to close its network, shutting down in three stages ending in September. Each carrier will keep its portion of the newly available spectrum, and will use it to boost their digital services. Other mobile carriers including Sprint Nextel and T-Mobile do not have analog networks and their customers will not be affected.

In 2002, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) authorized carriers to phase out analog networks, also known as Advanced Mobile Phone Service (AMPS) to free more airwaves for digital services. So the non-tech-savvy who haven’t upgraded their phones in several years, as well as people in areas too remote to receive digital signals, could end up without a lifeline.

Cell phone carriers say that up to 1 percent of all cell phones in the US (1 million) are analog. The effects will be felt the most by people who have things that aren’t phones but have built-in wireless capabilities, like OnStar cars and home alarm systems. Also impacted are glove-box users -- the people who bought a phone 10 years ago to use in case of an emergency and may not realize it is not working until they need it.

Last year, the Alarm Industry Communications Committee (AICC) put the number of alarm systems using analog service at 138,000. In most of those systems, the wireless link to the alarm center is a backup to the landline. But some homes lack a landline, so the wireless link is the only connection to the outside world.

Publicity about the deadline has been wide and the hope is that most systems will be changed before the deadline, but one complication is that some alarm systems advertised as "digital" actually use a digital subchannel of the analog network.

True digital alarm system modems did not become available until 2006, according to the AICC.

The Central Station Alarm Association, the parent of the AICC, tried to get the FCC to delay the analog sunset. The FCC turned away that request in 2007, saying digital networks can carry about 16 times more traffic using digital technology compared to analog.

**Cell phone coverage holes hurt public safety**

While most U.S. cities are blanketed with digital cell phone service at least four times over, huge patches of rural America still don’t have digital cell phone coverage. While only a quarter of the U.S. population lives in a rural area, roughly 75 percent of our country’s geography is rural.

Analog service has allowed cell phone users from any network to roam onto any other carrier’s analog network. Carriers not been able to fill in the digital coverage gaps because a single cell phone tower can cost between $500,000 and $1 million to deploy, and in many rural areas there aren’t enough subscribers to pay for the up-front cost of building a new tower.

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For these reasons a few rural cellular providers may keep their networks up. Plateau Wireless, which provides service in eastern New Mexico and western Texas, will maintain its analog network alongside a digital one "for the foreseeable future," according to Chief Executive Tom Phelps. Many of the company's 75,000 customers are farmers and ranchers, and the network's superior range helps them because it fills gaps in the digital network.

**Possible Solutions**
The FCC also can encourage coverage in rural areas through the allocation of new spectrum. The 700MHz band of spectrum, now used for analog television, travels up to three times farther than 1.9GHz cellular frequencies, could be ideal for use in rural areas. New rules from the FCC that allow satellite operators to use their spectrum to also provide terrestrial services could also help rural regions.

But even if carriers can get access to the capital to upgrade and expand their coverage, they still must get public approval for erecting new towers. Often they face resistance from community groups or from environmentalists. The FCC is currently accepting comments for new rules it may impose to protect migratory birds.

**Probably Not the Last Change**
Digital networks will almost certainly have shorter life spans than the 24-year run for AMPS, causing problems for manufacturers who want to include wireless technology in things that have long life spans.

The challenge is anticipating when the next network will be phased out. Some suggest that GPRS, or General Packet Radio Service, could be the next network to go, since this relatively slow second-generation digital technology isn't compatible with newer cellular broadband networks.
False alarms add up to a major problem - no matter how you calculate it. But without a standard method to measure the number of false alarms, comparisons lack value. Statistics allow us to compare one program with another-to measure our success or failure.

Properly calculated statistics can be of immense benefit to a company or a jurisdiction in identifying the scope of the false alarm dispatch problem. They allow us to focus efforts where they will be most effective. Armed with good statistical data, we can make informed decisions.

Focusing only on the total number of false alarms is not as effective as drawing conclusions based on the Alarm Factor.

**What Is The Alarm Factor?**
The Alarm Factor (aka Police Dispatch Rate) is simply the Total False Alarm Dispatches divided by the Total Registered Alarm Sites.

**How Do You Compute The Alarm Factor?**
The False Alarm Reduction Association (FARA) recommends that dispatch requests that are cancelled by the alarm company if the jurisdiction is notified prior to the arrival of the officers at the alarm site not be counted in the total number of False Alarm Dispatches.

FARA also recommends common cause dispatches (multiple dispatches that occur within a short period of time) and dispatches created by weather, phone company, alarm company, and power loss be counted in the total number of False Alarm Dispatches.

**Why is the Alarm Factor a Better Way?**
Using the alarm factor allows you to see the impact of your efforts more accurately. It allows you to adjust for the differences between companies or jurisdictions.

Acme Alarm generated 100 False Alarm Dispatches in January. Zebra Alarm only generated 50 False Alarm Dispatches in the same period. Looking at the totals Zebra seems to have done the better job.

The reality is that Acme Alarm has 1000 customers and would have an alarm factor of .1. Zebra Alarm has 100 customers and has an Alarm Factor of .5. One in ten of Acme’s customers generate alarms yet half of Zebra’s are reporting false alarms. So looking at the full picture Acme is doing the better job.

Calculating and tracking your alarm factor is the best way to track your progress. It also allows you to adjust as you add customers and by calculating your rates separately for new customers vs. existing customers or residential vs., commercial you can more accurately focus your efforts.
Interesting News

Candidate: Elect Me And I Won’t Serve-
San Antonio- AP- 1/22/08. A candidate for Kerr County treasurer is making a single campaign promise: Elect me and I won't serve. Ed Hamilton, 77, is challenging incumbent Treasurer Mindy Williams for the Republican nomination during the March 4 election. No Democrats are seeking the office. He said the job is redundant and costing the county money it doesn't need to spend. The duties should be assigned to another county office, Hamilton said. "I don't plan to do the job," he said. "I won't accept a paycheck." Hamilton said if elected, he would hand the duties to someone else and petition state officials for a referendum on a constitutional amendment that would allow any county to eliminate the treasurer position if it chooses. Williams, who was appointed last spring to the $46,000-a-year post, said the job shouldn't be eliminated. It provides accountability on the county's spending, a check and balance that is "essential to county government." Hamilton says "check and balance" is "a euphemism for duplication of effort."

Burglar May Face Divine Retribution-
Arlington, TX- 1/27/08- AP- Bishop’s crown, Bible, veil, other items stolen in smash-and-grab robbery. - A burglar who broke into a Greek Orthodox bishop's car made off with quite a haul, but fencing one of the stolen items could prove difficult. Among the items stolen from Bishop Metropolitan Isaiah's car was a jeweled crown of gold and silver, which Isaiah estimated to be worth between $6,000 and $10,000. Isaiah, who is based in Denver and is bishop for the Northwest region of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, said he was dining with others at a restaurant when the break-in occurred. He said the car was parked in a well-lit spot. "We came out at 10 o'clock, and the window was smashed," he said. The burglar also made off with a copy of the New Testament, a veil, a cell phone and a black fabric bag. The bag had special meaning to the ex-Marine because it was given to him years ago by the widow of a fellow Marine. Isaiah offered a reward of at least $1,000 if the crown is returned without damage. I just hope and pray that those who took it will have a change of heart," he said.

Thieves Steal 2,600 Cases of Beer
Albany, Ga. 12/28/07- AP. Sounds like some south Georgia crooks have been stocking up for a big holiday bash. Thieves took tractor-trailers loaded with beer and swiped the suds twice within the past week, authorities said. Dougherty County authorities are investigating a report of a missing 53-foot-long trailer that was loaded with more than 2,300 cases of beer. Police said the beer disappeared sometime between Dec. 21 and Thursday. Also on Dec. 21, more than 300 cases of beer were stolen from another tractor-trailer, which had a tracking device. The trailer was driven about three miles before it was emptied, according to police.

Burglar Demands Ransom, Forgets Details
Idaho Falls, Idaho - 1/4/08-AP. A handkerchief-wearing thief had a videotaped message for his victim: pay a $3,000 ransom, and you can get your video games back. There was just one problem. The burglar forgot to include any instructions for dropping off the cash. "We're not dealing with brain surgeons here," police Lt. Joe Cawley said. The message was delivered by videotape, but overlooked until recently. The day after the woman had items stolen from her car in November, she found her own videotape stuck inside her mailbox. While she reported the theft and finding the videotape right away, she just got around to watching the entire tape last week, Cawley said. That's when she discovered that part of the original content — the recent birth of her child — had been taped over with a message from the burglar who stole her video games, a compact disc player, camera equipment, clothing and a video camera. "We would really like to catch this guy," Cawley said. "We don't know if they intended actually to bribe them for money or were fooling around. But the victims are living in a lot of fear because they know where they live and some personal things about them via the video."
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