

THE MIRROR

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2021 TMA Excellence Awards Winners Announced

The Monitoring Association (TMA) presented its 2021 Excellence Awards which recognize monitoring centers and outstanding personnel who perform in the highest professional manner, thereby making a significant contribution to the betterment of the alarm industry and the alarm profession while demonstrating exceptional service to their customers and community.



The 2021 Excellence Award Winners are:

2021 Monitoring Center of the Year

-Enterprise Level – Vivint Smart Home

2021 Monitoring Center of the Year -

Small-to-Medium Business Level

-Universal Atlantic Systems (UAS)

2021 Manager of the Year

-Jonathan Rainbow

Rapid Response Monitoring Services, Inc.

2021 Operator of the Year

-Diandra Dean

Affiliated Monitoring, Inc.

2021 Support Person of the Year

-Michelle Quattrini

Rapid Response Monitoring Services

-Deepak Bysani

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TMA's Monitoring Center Excellence Awards are co-sponsored by **SDM Magazine**, which will publish a feature story on the winners in its August issue. Entries are judged by a blue-ribbon volunteer judging panel appointed by TMA. For past winners and more information, visit www.tma.us.

The Monitoring Association (TMA) and **Security Sales & Integration (SSI)** Magazine Editor-in-Chief and Associate Publisher Scott Goldfine presented the 2021 TMA/SSI Monitoring Technology "Marvel" Award to Florida-based ADT, LLC for its SoSecure app. Leah Page, Vice President, Mobile Security & Strategic Projects, ADT, accepted the award on behalf of winning company. SoSecure by ADT is an iOS and Android safety app and gives customers access to ADT's 24/7 professional monitoring and emergency response with a simple swipe, tap, or voice command on their mobile phone. GPS location, personally identifiable details, and any available contextual data is shared with emergency responders unless the user indicates (with authentication) that the request was an accident.

CAA Palm Springs Convention

Includes Golf, Meetings June 23-26, 2021

The California Alarm Association will host their CAA Palm Springs Convention June 23-26, 2021 at the Hilton Palm Springs.

The first two people from each alarm installing company are guests of the sponsors for golf at Escena Golf Club, three hosted receptions, meals, ladies' lunch and more than 15 workshops and presentations.

The Hilton Palm Springs rate is \$149 per night. Registration, sponsorship and program information is available at www.caaonline.org or by calling 800-437-7658.



Taxes to Follow COVID

After a year of coping with COVID lockdowns and reduced revenues the potential increase in business and individual tax rates may be our next challenge. President Biden has suggested raising federal rates on businesses and the wealthy to pay for his forthcoming infrastructure bill and programs to combat inequality and climate change. Under his proposed plan, the current 21% rate for corporations would rise to 28%. The Section 199a deduction, a lucrative 20% tax benefit for passthrough businesses like sole proprietorships, S corporations, partnerships and limited liability companies, would be scaled back. And the current top individual rate would go back to 39.6% from 37%, and affect people making at least \$400,000 a year. Even the \$400,000 floor is subject to change.

Taxes, continued on page 3

Arizona Alarm Association 2021 Annual Convention

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THE MIRROR

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hit the Road, Jack!

It's not normal, but what is normal any more.

The CAA Palm Springs Convention will be held at the Hilton Palm Springs June 23-26, 2021. Get rid of your zoom pants and join us for 20 informative presentations, golf at Escena and a full schedule of networking events.

We will also highlight our scholarship winner and the finalists for the CAA Mark Schubert Award. Register today!



By Mike Salk

**The CAA Palm
Springs Convention
will be held at
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26, 2021. ... join us
for 20 informative
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at Escena and a
full schedule of
networking events.**

Thanks to our sponsors, the first two people from each installing company are guests. This includes meals, three hosted receptions and golf.

The board is committed to a safe convention following CDC guidelines and working closely with the Hilton.

Visit www.caaonline.org for free registration, and rooms at the Hilton for \$149.

We get back to ISC West July 19-21, 2021 at the Sands Expo. Free registration is now available at www.ISCwest.com.

Please join us on the eve of the show for a hosted reception at the ROCKHOUSE in the Venetian. I guarantee the best karaoke talent in the industry.

We continue to operate as normal with training, government affairs in Sacramento and Washington, and working with our public safety partners.

I look forward to seeing you soon.

Michael Salk

President

California Alarm Association

Taxes, continued from page 1

The President has also proposed making the current top capital gains rate of 23.8% (20% plus the "Obamacare" tax) the same as the top individual rate for those making at least \$1 million a year. Separately, some Senate Democrats are considering a proposal to tax unrealized capital gains of \$1 million or more, at death.

One strategy for alarm company owners is to defer deductions to future years. Many owners have purchased big ticket items (computers, work trucks, tools, etc.) at year end and expensed them using what is know at the "179 deduction." We have been encouraging most of our clients to depreciate these items instead, thereby deferring most of the deduction to future years. There are two reasons for this, first, a deduction in a future year in which tax rates are higher, may be worth more. Secondly, owners of most "pass through" entities such as S Corporations and some Limited Partnerships, receive a deduction of 20% against the taxable income of the entity. If this deduction disappears or becomes limited in future years, deductions will also become more valuable.

Many tax advisors are suggesting that their S Corporation clients revoke their status and revert to C Corporations. While this may be a good strategy in many industries, it can create disastrous tax bills in the sale of an alarm company.

Changes and challenges are coming. Make sure that you are communicating with your tax advisor throughout the year. Also, make sure that they understand your business and industry. If you feel uncomfortable, give us a call.

Mitch Reitman is Managing Principal of Reitman Consulting Group, Inc., which specializes in the alarm and systems integration industry. He can be reached at MReitman@Reitman.US.

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LEGISLATIVE WATCH

PAC ALERT

\$30,000 GOAL FOR 2021

By Don Gilbert, Mike Robson, and Trent Smith

The Political Action Committee (PAC) is an important part of the CAA governmental relations program. In past years, CAA has raised more than \$30,000 in its PAC to contribute to business-minded legislators. We want to establish this funding level as a goal for 2021 and encourage CAA members to contribute what they can to reach this goal.

As a reminder, PACs allow citizens with a common interest to join together to participate in the political process. Members of an industry association or employees of a company have an interest in supporting candidates whose philosophy is conducive to creating an environment in which their business can succeed. By donating to the company or association's PAC fund, employees or members help ensure that legislators will be elected who are interested in and responsive to the concerns of the company or industry.

CAA PAC FUND CONTRIBUTIONS

The California Alarm Association has a very strong government relations program that works on the local, state and national level. In addition to the hundreds of hours of volunteer service from our members, we have a CAA PAC Fund which supports our interests in Sacramento.

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**2021 Annual Meeting and
Codes Conference Information**

The AFAA Annual Meeting will be held virtually **May 4-5, 2021** via Zoom with continued conference dates on May 12, 29 and 26. Elections will be held during our business meeting to vote on board candidates and proposed by-law changes.

Attendee Pricing for 10 Hours of continuing education is AFAA Members: \$150; AFAA AHJ Members: \$75; Non-Members: \$250. All registration fees include a \$30 Grubhub credit.

For registration and sponsorship visit www.afa.org.

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DEALER PERSPECTIVE...#32



By Tony Smith

Over the last few months, we have written about the growth prospects and necessity of rooftop solar especially here in California and the West. Many pundits predict that the number of new solar homes will be approximately 30 million, with most of them in California. The truth may be that the number might be larger and that it will be a national expansion of solar homes, not just regional. One of the surprising developments emerging from the last administration is that automotive companies, from around the world, are making the commitment to convert to EV over the next 5-6 years. Volvo, Volkswagen, BMW, Mercedes, and Toyota are joining domestic producers, Ford, GM, and Chrysler-Renault to make this dramatic change. America is a commuter society, which means we drive to our places of employment. The assumption is that a solar home can charge the electric vehicle each night and have it ready for the next day's commute.

Beginning now and over the next few years, the American public will finally begin to lose its collective fear of the limited range of EV batteries. Today, it takes several hours (or more) to recharge a depleted battery when compared to putting more gas in the tank, a legitimate hurdle for some. However, the continuing improvements in battery technology and the fact that overnight will then "refill the tank", in most commute situations is beginning to change this perception. This transition will not be easy, since our gas station habits have to change and gas stations have too as well. Gas stations, clearly, will be necessary for the transition and beyond. They will likely become hybrid gas and charging stations. However, there is little question that we will have, at least, some need for gas stations for many years to come.

The key to the transition to EV will be the addition of charging stations in the garage and the conversion to rooftop solar with battery back-up. Here in California, we have encountered a strong adversary to rooftop solar, that being the major utilities. They have launched a new initiative to dramatically reduce the reimbursement amount they

are required to pay solar rooftop owners for electricity they contribute to the grid. Yes, you heard that correctly. The major utilities are seeking regulatory relief from the required purchase of excess electricity generated by rooftop solar. There is a strong case for rooftop solar to remain part of a mini grid in their region, but the long-term need to be part of the major utility grid is rapidly evaporating. Right now, not all rooftop installations have battery back-up, thus requiring a grid connection to provide power at night and during storms or other restrictions on available sunlight. The politics in this regulatory arena can be brutal and the major utilities have the lobbying power to stifle solar rooftop growth and preserve their dominant role in power distribution.

The key to rooftop solar growth, with batteries, is the popular acceptance of the need to replace power plants, both fossil fuels based and nuclear, with green renewables. There is room in the growth of the Smart Home for solar technology, in fact, it may be almost a necessity. It may take a leap of faith to imagine your local alarm dealer actually installing a solar system, but many of us are up to the challenge of partnering with a local roofing contractor and electrician. The alarm dealer customer base is already pre-disposed to a solar rooftop installation after they have installed a Smart Home system. Solar requires monitoring and no one is, presumably, more aware of the importance of managing Smart Home monitoring than the alarm dealer. There may also be an opportunity for Smart Home alarm dealers to do a better job of communicating with their customer about their Smart Home usage if they are also monitoring their solar activity.

This growth opportunity is not for everyone, but the concept of partnerships and teaming-up in some fashion will give us the confidence and relationships to retain our Smart Home management role. Said another way, If you do not develop some solar expertise and relationships, you may be jeopardizing your existing alarm base.

Tony Smith is a Past President of the CAA and a former member of the Board of ESA. He is the Founder, President and CEO of Security Funding Associates, a leading industry financial services firm. He may be reached at tsmith@securityfundingsolutions.com or (855) 723-2229.

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Scott Gobbi has joined the **TELGUARD** Sales Team as the North Central Region Sales Manager. Scott is a five-year veteran of Telguard, and has represented the company well in the Customer Service and Marketing departments. He looks forward to working with security dealers, integrators and distributors in ten states – Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. He can be reached at 678-909-4606, email scott.gobbi@ametek.com. For more information about Telguard visit telguard.com.

SDi is pleased to announce that the TAURI 7 Temperature Check Tablet is a 2021 Secure Campus Awards recipient and is being recognized for its outstanding achievement in the Screening Equipment category. SDi has partnered with Glory Star to bring customers access to TAURI Temperature Check Tablets in response to the need for safe, accurate and reliable temperature checks. TAURI is designed to protect employees, visitors, and customers with a non-invasive temperature check by using advanced and proven technology for detecting heat signatures emitted by the human body. The TAURI 7 combines the TAURI temperature checking technology with additional features such as a dual camera for better facial recognition of staff profiles that can be saved to the device. It also has a built in TCPIP relay for door access control, ensuring only those without a fever can enter the building. Additionally, the TAURI 7 features a waterproof anti-glare screen, making it more versatile and ideal for outdoor use. For more information visit www.sdifire.com or call 732-751.9266.

Social distancing and travel restrictions have forced security companies to create new ways to stay in contact with their staff and customers, and as a result, virtual meetings have become the new normal. **DMP** is maximizing those capabilities with a new virtual event suite. Three studios have been



added with the latest technology and production equipment, allowing DMP to deliver simultaneous web conferencing on request. DMP's new virtual training suite makes it very easy to offer professional

product demonstrations, first hand directly from the manufacturer. Many DMP's customers are already taking a closer look at DMP's newly released X1 Series. "When you're meeting with a prospective customer who wants to hear more about the X1, this makes it very easy to bring us into the conversation," says Jon Adams, DMP's Executive Director of Business Development. "Showing a tight partnership with the system manufacturer adds value, and we're always happy to support our dealers in selling DMP products." For more information, contact Mark Hillenburg at MHillenburg@DMP.com or visit DMP.com.

DMP welcomed James "Jim" Dirkes as Dealer Development Manager for the Upper Midwest territory which encompasses Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, North and South Dakota and Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Jim's technical aptitude became apparent early on in his career with his first assignment in the U.S. Navy: Aviation Electronics. He has worked with manufacturers, installers and dealers in electronic security as a Senior Installation Technician, Programmer, Trainer, Sales Manager and Security Consultant. He arrives at DMP with a collective 30 years of security industry experience and recognition from colleagues for his skills in CCTV, access control and new business development. Derek Ottman, DMP's Director of Sales over the Central States territories, remarks, "Jim's industry experience, professionalism and commitment to his dealers have made him a trusted and



valued partner for years in the Upper Midwest territory. We are confident in Jim's ability to represent DMP as the industry's leading access control and intrusion platform manufactured in the USA." He can be contacted at 800-641-4282 Ext. 1052 or JDirkes@DMP.com.

DMP welcomed Scott Mellecker to the East Sales team as Dealer Development Manager for New England. Dealers in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut can look to Scott for ongoing service and support. In this role, Scott found success focusing on vertical markets. Contact Mellecker at 800-641-4282, Ext. 1054 or SMellecker@DMP.com.



RESIDEO TECHNOLOGIES announced it has acquired privately held Norfolk Wire & Electronics based in Richmond, Va. Norfolk was founded in 1985 and is a leading regional distributor of security, telecom, network and audio-video (AV) related products, supplies and tools. With 11 full-service retail locations and a 43,000 sq. ft. distribution center, Norfolk serves customers across the mid-Atlantic region, and will be part of Resideo's ADI Global Distribution business, a leading wholesale distributor of security, AV and low-voltage products. "ADI is core to Resideo's long-term growth, and this acquisition aligns with our strategy to identify

and execute on tuck-in acquisitions that accelerate ADI's expansion in adjacent categories," said Jay Goldmacher, President and CEO of Resideo. "The products and services of Norfolk Wire & Electronics complement ADI's existing offerings and expand our reach into an attractive growth market." The Norfolk acquisition builds upon ADI's presence in the Data Communications market with an assortment of copper and fiber cabling, connectors, racking products and more. For more information about Resideo, please visit www.resideo.com.

POTTER ELECTRIC SIGNAL COMPANY announced the acquisition of SureCall's emergency responder communication enhancement systems (ERCES) business which provides in-building public safety radio communications for first responders. The combination of SureCall's Guardian product range with TowerIQ's technology provides the broadest ERCES offering in the market. Potter's CEO, Gerry Connolly, commented, "We see the opportunity to improve in-building emergency communications and now have the most complete platform for meeting the requirements of ERCES across North America. SureCall's products are very complementary to Potter's own range of IP-based systems and platforms, enabling edge-to-cloud connectivity for emergency responders, building owners and facility managers." ERCES technology is growing in importance throughout North America and internationally, as local jurisdictions and municipalities adopt codes that specify the need for reliable radio signal coverage used by emergency personnel and first responders.

SnapAV announced it is now carrying core Ring products, including the pro-focused "X Line", on SnapAV.com and in SnapAV Local Pro Stores for U.S.-based SnapAV partners. "The vision of SnapAV is to provide our pros choices whenever and wherever they need it," said SnapAV Vice President of Product Management, Jason Winchester. "If they need a product like Ring for a same-day installation, our Local Pro Stores are ready to serve with in-stock availability. If they need to outfit an entire smart home, everything they need can be ordered at SnapAV.com or procured at the local stores." The full list of Ring products includes Ring Video Doorbells and in-home Chimes, Surveillance Cams, Ring Smart Lighting, X Line, and Ring Alarm, as well as compatible sensors like a Panic Button, Smoke/CO Listener, and Flood & Freeze Sensor. Additional information about SnapAV and its products can be found at www.snapav.com.

SnapAV has acquired HCA Distributing in Denver and Salt Lake City, according to Trevor Hansen, Manager of the SnapAV Volutone business unit. "We are proud to add HCA to our growing network and be able to serve our

Associates News continued on page 14

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partners in these two very important markets," Hansen said today. "We're also pleased that the entire HCA team, led by Ron Perron, will be joining Volutone and bringing with them their impressive reputation for customer service in these markets." Upon acquisition, Volutone immediately expanded the Salt Lake City location by moving operations to a 10,000 square-foot store that is over the twice of the size of the original. "SnapAV is in the middle of an industry-changing plan to better serve both the integration community and end user customers, and we're thrilled to be a part of it," Ron Perron said. Additional information about SnapAV and its products can be found at www.snapav.com/engage.



INDUSTRY NEWS

How the Market Is Bouncing Back from the Pandemic

By: Jim Wooster, Jr., Alarm Financial Services, Inc.

Just over a year ago, businesses in this country and around the world had to shift into a very different mode of operating as shelter in place and work from home became the new reality. Once we addressed keeping our employees and co-workers safe, the big questions on the minds of everyone in the security industry were, how would business be impacted? Who would want a technician or salesperson to come into their home or business? Would the demand for remote video and managed access control increase? What kind of attrition would we see?

For companies that were in the middle of making acquisitions, the uncertainty of the COVID reality led many of those would-be buyers to put on the brakes. How much to pay for a recurring revenue-based alarm company becomes very different consideration when fear of attrition going from 8% to 18% enters the equation. As a result, many buyers decided to take a wait and see approach, understandably. Some pushed ahead

but changed the pricing or terms such as holdback percentage. Basically, merger and acquisition activity looked very different for a few months.

Then something happened that seems to happen regularly in the alarm industry: everyone was reminded how resilient it is. The mergers and acquisitions resumed. And from what we see at Alarm Financial Services, buyers and sellers are making up for lost time. Our perspective is focused almost exclusively on small to medium-sized companies, so the large players in the industry may be experiencing something different. But from where we sit, the action is heating up. Long-time owners still want to cash out and retire; young as well as mature companies still see the benefit in complimenting their organic growth with buying their local friendly competitor.

Learn more about AFS and its loan services at www.alarmfinancial.com, or contact Jim Wooster directly at 866-845-2678 x1200 or jfwooster@alarmfinancial.com.



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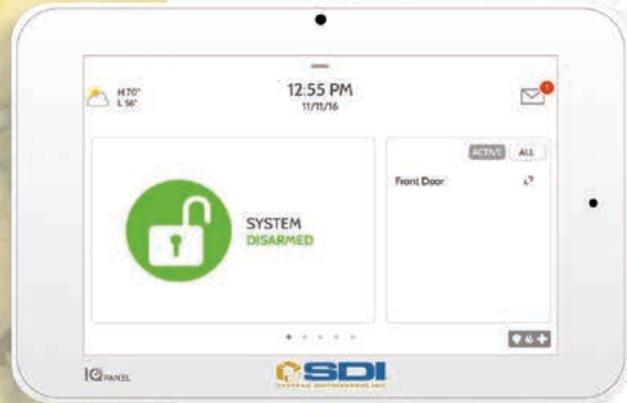
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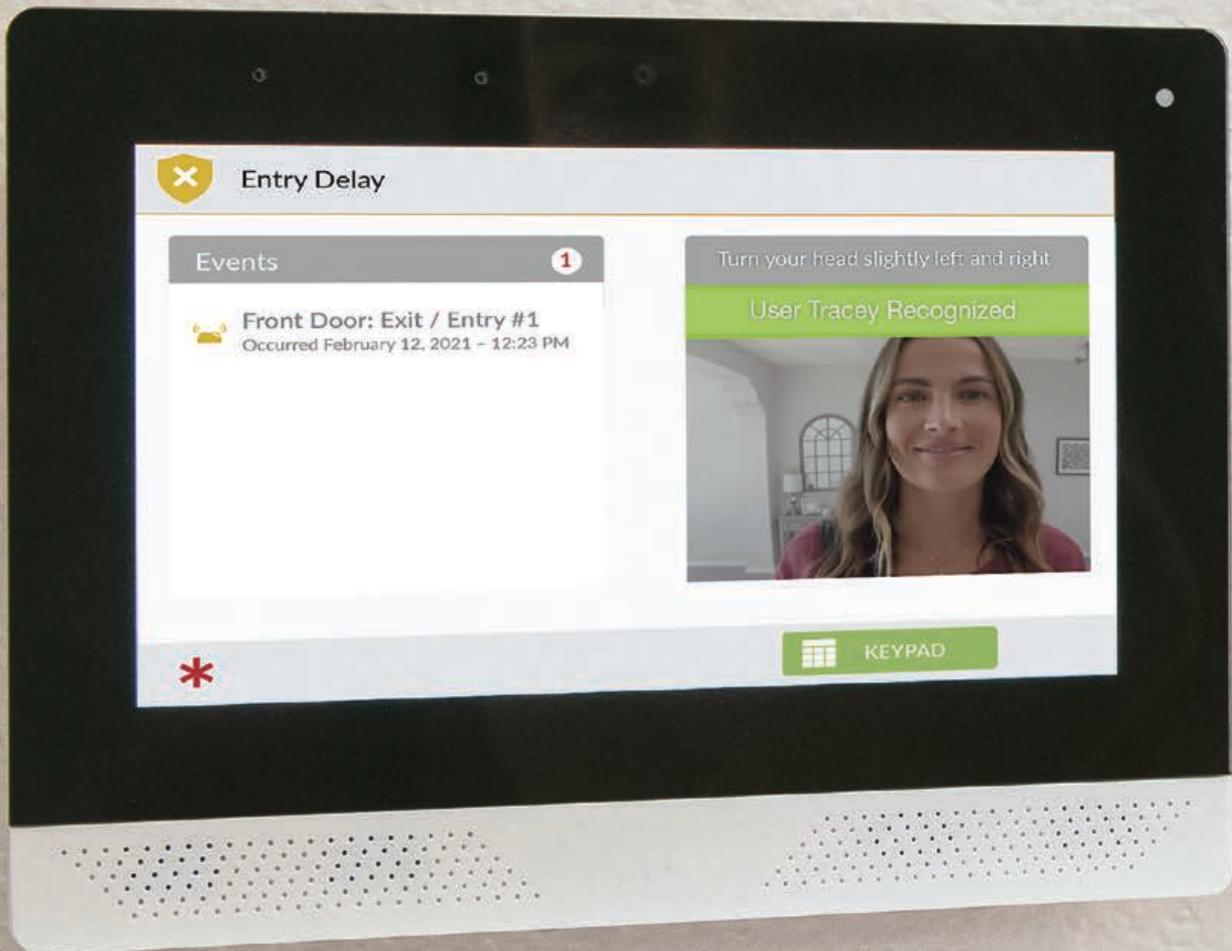
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Tim Westphal, EBAA President

EBAA Meetings

For questions, please reach out to Treasurer Deric Morrow 510-432-8130 deric.morrow@amag.com.

RSVP to 800-437-7658 or info@caaonline.org.

Richmond Ordinance

Alarm users are required to have an alarm permit, and failure to obtain one will result in a \$250 fine to BOTH THE ALARM /MONITORING COMPANY AND ALARM USER. Permits can be obtained now by the alarm user or alarm company online here: www.crywolfservices.com/richmondca/. Click on "new Users" for the permit application. The permit fee is \$30 for a two-year alarm permit. Renewals will be the same fee and term. A list of your newly installed, and newly cancelled alarm customers must be submitted on a monthly basis to richmondca@publicsafetycorp.com.

GLASAA

Greater Los Angeles Security Alarm Association

David Michel, President

New members are always welcome at GLASAA. Every local company in our industry should attend our meetings. We always have great people and informative topics. This is a fantastic opportunity to network with your peers and industry experts and to discuss what's going on in the business.

Please feel free to email me at dmichel@valleyalarm.com.

GLASAA Meetings and Events

Please visit our website at www.glasaa.org.

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MID CAL ALARM ASSOCIATION

Mike Tarin, President



INLAND EMPIRE ALARM ASSOCIATION

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IEAA is a professional association of alarm companies and leading industry specialists, focusing on bringing together the best resources possible for the mutual benefit of all members and associates. It is our goal to bring knowledgeable people together as a resource to better protect your business and your customers' safety. Please make time to come out and be a part of what I believe is the future of the alarm industry in California. Professional, Beneficial, Informational.

IEAA Membership

If you would like to become a member or have any suggestions on ways to increase our membership, please us a call at 800-559-9060.



GREATER VALLEY ALARM ASSOCIATION

Joe Castro, President

GVAA MEETINGS

Our meetings are held at Custom Electronic Supply, 1324 Dupont Court, Manteca 95336 and they start at 11:30 a.m. GVAA meetings are held on the second Thursday of every third month (once a quarter) at the above location. Please contact Joe Castro at 209-384-3305 or by email at josephc@alarmwatch.com for more information.



REDWOOD ALARM ASSOCIATION

Sean Cooke, President

Meetings

For questions about the association, please contact Sean Cooke at scooke@allguard-systems.com or 800-255-4273.



ORANGE COUNTY ALARM ASSOCIATION

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CITY OF IRVINE PERMITS

The City of Irvine requires all alarm users to register their systems with a no fee permit. Alarm users may obtain an alarm permit application at the Irvine Police department website at www.irvinepd.org. The City also offers quarterly Alarm Awareness Classes to help defray the cost of false alarm fines.

For more information about OCAA activities, contact the OCAA office at 800-437-7658 or email OCAAlarmAssoc@aol.com. Visit our new website at www.alarmassociation.org for meeting information and registration forms, training opportunities, members list and a whole lot more.



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Matt Kruger, President

City of San Diego Permit Process

The San Diego Security Association and SIAC have been working cooperatively with the City of San Diego to assist with their fire alarm program, and now their burglar alarm program. The police are requesting alarm companies to submit their active burglar, panic and holdup alarm customer lists to the San Diego Police Department. The preferred method is to send your excel customer list electronically by email to Hilda Gonzalez-Reed at hgonzalezreed@pd.sandiego.gov. If you have any questions, please contact Hilda Gonzalez Reed at hgonzalezreed@pd.sandiego.gov or 619-531-2247. Visit our website www.sandiegosecurityassociation.org.

The San Diego Police Department Permits Division reminds all alarm companies that they are required to have a valid alarm permit for the premise being installed, prior to the installation of an intrusion or fire system. The alarm company is responsible for obtaining or verifying the existence of an existing alarm permit for the premise. For information please contact SDPD Permits Division – Frank Dragula 619-531-2364 Fdragula@pd.sandiego.gov



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SVAA Information

If you are not on our e-mail list, please contact Deric Morrow at 510- 921-3987 or deric.morrow@jci.com. It is so important to get involved with your local associations more than ever and to keep up to date on all the new information.



GOLDEN GATE
ALARM ASSOCIATION

Paul Wassem, President

Meetings to be held at: Chevy's Fresh Mex, 141 Hickey Blvd, South San Francisco, CA 94080

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For further information, contact the CAA at info@caaonline.org or call 800-437-7658.



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Members: remind your Clark County, NV police and fire contacts that the deadline for applications for the 2021 NSA Youth Scholarship is May 7! For more info see our website www.nevadasecurityassociation.org/scholarships.

THE NSA HAS A NEW MAILING ADDRESS: 1000 N. Green Valley Parkway #440-634, Henderson, NV 89074. Please change your records. JOIN US IN 2021! Membership applications available on our website www.nevadasecurityassociation.org.

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With COVID restrictions still in place, CBFAA continues its mission to assist its members. Currently CBFAA is monitoring bills submitted to the Colorado Assembly that may affect our members, and has been investigating solutions to the workforce development issue.

Make this the year you make a difference for your business and your industry by joining CBFAA! Your membership allows your voice to be heard. CBFAA has a new easy flat rate dues structure for 2021 that makes membership easy! Membership applications are available on our website www.cbfaa.org. Due to Covid-19, the CBFAA is carefully considering its next meetings. Watch your inbox and newsletter for continued updates.

New to CBFAA? Add your name to our email list to get meeting notifications and our newsletter. Once you see the benefits of membership, you'll want to add your voice to ours. Info and membership applications available on our website www.cbfaa.org.

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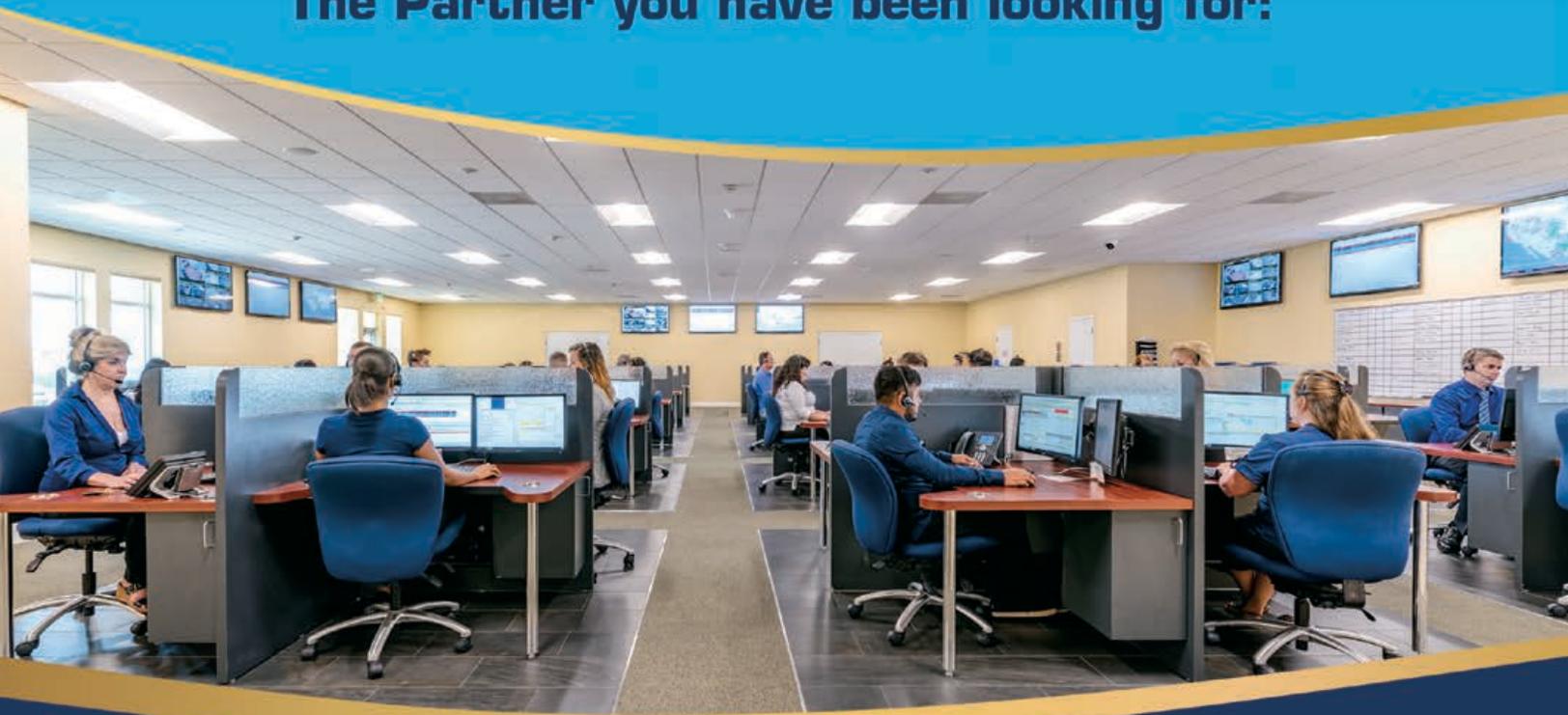


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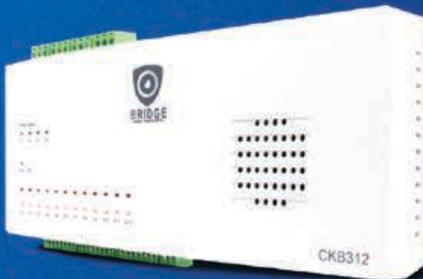
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Georgia Bans Fines for Alarm Companies

The Georgia General Assembly has approved a bill that would ban counties or municipal corporations from fining alarm companies for false alarms generated by a customer and through no fault of the alarm system's contractor.

"This bill has wider implications than for just our industry," said John Loud, Vice President of Electronic Security

Association (ESA) and President of LOUD Security Systems. "The concept of fining a company for a problem caused by its customers is the equivalent of sending someone's speeding ticket to Ford and sets a precedent that could be a threat to many industries."

"These policies do little to change user behavior, deny the user the right to confront their accuser and access to due process, and fines an innocent party for the actions of another," said Stan Martin, Executive Director of the Security Industry Alarm Coalition (SIAC).

The introduction of the legislation follows a bitter three-year fight after the City of Sandy Springs passed a punitive ordinance that fined alarm companies. The city's success in defending the legislation in court caused the legislature to act. Only one other Georgia city, Brookhaven, followed Sandy Springs' lead.

A number of other states have passed bills similar to the Georgia bill in recent years including California, Florida, New Jersey, Texas, Tennessee and Iowa.

"There has never been any evidence that fining alarm companies was any more effective than the model alarm ordinance that is widely utilized nationally and endorsed by the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police," said Martin. "The model ordinance, which fines alarm users, obtains an average 60% reduction in false dispatches and impacts those causing most of the problems. In fact, 85% of alarm systems generate no calls to the police in any given year."

Under the law companies are responsible for false alarms they cause due to faulty equipment or installation or failure to use a mandated system requiring two calls to an alarm site before notifying police.

"Common sense prevailed," said Loud. "Our industry stands ready to work with any community that wishes to reduce unnecessary dispatches with a proven model and experts ready to assist."

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Positive Reviews = Higher RMR for Alarm Companies



By Brian Plant, Ignite Marketing Group

There is another new study that points to a direct correlation between customer reviews and revenues for the businesses who receive them. Conducted by a leading social analytics firm and the Paley Center for Media, this study measured exactly how much more people were willing to pay for products based on the reviews they had read.

Nearly 6,000 people were studied, and many variables were introduced, including whether the reviews came from online strangers or social media friends (who the user would be likely to know in real life). According to the study's findings, highly positive online reviews can generate an increase in purchase intent by up to 10 percent. On the flip side, negative reviews can reduce purchase intent by 11 percent.

When Customers Will Pay More

The research concluded that people are often willing to pay more for a product based on a positive online review (in a review forum like Angie's List, Yelp, or the Amazon reviews section below product listings). They may also be willing to pay more if they see the product recommended via a share on social media (such as a Facebook share, a positive tweet or a Reddit post). When it comes to an iPad, for example, the consumer would pay \$22.26 more based on a positive review by a stranger, and even more (\$27.42) if the recommendation came from a friend or family member.

Pro Tip: The more positive reviews people see, the more they will be willing to buy from you – and, perhaps even spend a little more than they had budgeted (i.e. home automation).

Still, for products like electronics, reviews conducted by professionals carry even more weight. If a professional in the industry gave a positive review or share to a product, consumers were willing to pay up to \$31.13 more. That's evidence that reviews have real, meaningful influence. Likewise, bad reviews drove down the price that consumers were willing to pay for the same iPad – up to \$32.30 less, in fact.

How this Applies to Alarm Companies

How is this relevant to reviews for electronic security companies? Your alarm company's products and your customer service can all be reviewed

by average consumers on review forums, and they can also be subject to feedback on the social media platforms listed here.

The more positive reviews people see, the more they will be willing to buy from you – and, perhaps even spend a little more than they had budgeted. Likewise, negative reviews will have the opposite effect. That's why it's so crucial to get as many positive reviews of your business as you can, on every possible online platform.

When you seek out reviews from happy customers, they create a domino effect that encourages others to chime in as well. When this happens, your star-based review score can increase by a full one to two points. Ideally, you could watch your star jump from a three to a five in a matter of days.

If you simply wait for customers to give you a glowing review, you will be waiting a long time – and while you're waiting, the small but vocal minority of your dissatisfied customers will be posting their negative reviews. Don't let them impact your business this way; instead, seek out positive reviews from your scores of highly satisfied customers.

Brian Plant is the Managing Director at Ignite Marketing Group: The Official Webmaster of the CAA and the WBFSA. He is a member of the Inland Empire Alarm Association, ESA, and SIA. He can be reached at 877-655-3779, ext. 1. or bplant@igniteleads.com

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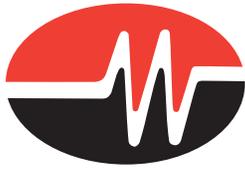


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Payroll Tax Pitfalls



By Mitch Reitman

Payroll taxes and withholding present a tempting source of working capital for a small business. Payroll tax payments are easy to divert because there isn't really an invoice (at first). Payroll taxes and withholding are 'voluntarily' reported on IRS Form 941 (Employer's Quarterly Federal Tax Return) and paid via direct deposit to the IRS. The IRS does not typically pursue unpaid payroll tax liability for a year or two so, at the outset, employers may find it easy to keep

the funds. Many business owners believe that they can file 941 Forms that underreport tax liability and pay in lower amounts than actual withholding. These schemes do not end well as this business owner found out.

Thomas O'Connell owned and operated three plumbing businesses and from at least 2005 through 2016 did not pay federal employment taxes for several quarters. Instead, he directed payments to other creditors and to his personal expenses. The federal tax loss from O'Connell's conduct totaled more than \$550,000. This may sound like a lot of money but it was only around \$950 per week. Mr. O'Connell apparently did not spend the money on lavish assets, he probably just used it to keep cash in the bank. Sentencing is June 24, when he faces a maximum of five years in prison, a period of supervised release, restitution and monetary penalties.

The IRS is very concerned about employment tax diversion. They view this differently than they view failure to pay income tax because employment taxes are paid into Social Security and withheld

from employee paychecks. Employment "tax" payments have two components, the Employer's portion of Social Security and Medicare, which is a payment made by the Employer on behalf of the worker, and taxes withheld, which are the Employees' portion of Social Security and Medicare and the amounts withheld from Employee paychecks as a prepayment of the Employees' Federal Income Tax.

The last two items are referred to as Trust Funds as the money is actually paid by the Employees through payroll deductions and remitted to the IRS by the Employer. The IRS takes the position, and rightly so, that this was never the Employer's money, but rather money paid by the Employees, and held in Trust by the Employer. The IRS has become very aggressive in collecting these funds. O'Connell's case is an example of a new approach by the IRS in which they claim that the funds actually belong to the IRS, and that the Employer has stolen them. They justify their position (and the Courts have agreed) by claiming that if the Employer does not remit the funds, the IRS is forced to make good on the deficiency by accepting the amount withheld from paychecks as taxes paid by the Employee. The IRS considers this theft and is very aggressive in pursuing this in Federal Court.

The moral of the story is, if you need additional money in the bank, borrow it from the bank. If you look to the IRS as a short term of cash, you may end up with a long-term problem.

Mitch Reitman is Managing Principal of Reitman Consulting Group, Inc. He is a Member of the Electronic Security Hall of Fame and the 2009 recipient of the Mark Schubert Associate of the Year Award from the California Alarm Association. He can be reached at MReitman@Reitman.US.

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