

# The HANDSHAKE

Volume 53 / August - September 2006 / Issue 7

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*by Roy Pollack, CPP SET*

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To Whom It May Concern:

As you may be aware, on July 1, 2006, the State of Florida became the first in the country to activate a state-wide law requiring Enhanced Call Verification (ECV) to help reduce the number of dispatches for police departments. Governor Jeb Bush signed this into law on Friday, June 9, 2006.

The City of Fort Lauderdale Police Department wholeheartedly endorses this law and asks that your company follow this procedure before dispatching our agency for alarm activations. This simple step will help to decrease alarm service calls as the policy frees time for officers to respond to other calls and allows our police officers to use their time more efficiently to better protect the community they serve. Our citizens deserve more from us and we look forward to providing them with the service they expect from their police department. Please help us to give them that service by avoiding unnecessary false alarm dispatches. Most can be prevented by a second call that can often disqualify alarms as false. Your customers will thank you for taking this extra step in saving them costly alarm service fees.

Thank you and for your information, we have enclosed an article on this subject that you might find of interest.

Sincerely,



**Sergeant Gerald Machurick**  
**Alarm Unit**  
**Fort Lauderdale Police Department**  
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**Fort Lauderdale, FL 33312**  
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Enclosure

# The President's Column

by Roy Pollack, CPP Set

Several months ago I wrote in this column that I enjoyed having this forum to both relay continuously updated and important information to members, while at the same time having a platform for my own views and sometimes sarcastic, but always tongue in cheek comments. These comments are mine and mine alone, and not necessarily the views of the AAF or its Board of Directors.

Last month I reported about the success of the AAF in its efforts to promote, support, or endorse legislation. Subsequently I learned that there were some people who weren't so thoroughly thrilled with the results of this year's legislative activities.

The issue seems to be the requirement of having any additional certifications, registrations, approvals or registrations other than the licenses specified in FS489. The AAF is comprised of hundreds of members, some who are quite small, some are of a medium size, and the few latter companies are the mega companies with dozens or hundreds of employees and thousands upon thousands of customers.

The AAF can not please every member, and I have tried to communicate this to those who have been upset. Some, without success. In the past even some public officials have taken comments from my column and those in Bob Neely's column out of context, and even totally misquoted them intentionally. So I decided to lay out some of my own personal views item by item here and now:

1. My company is a large UL Listed and FM Approved company with our own central station monitoring thousands of accounts with few certificated or placarded.
2. Personally I was against the efforts of the AAF to: first promote legislation requiring third party licensing, and then second to lower what I consider to be a valuable section of the fire standards protection for the public.
3. I am not thrilled with the procedures employed by certain municipalities that have implemented section 8.2 simply because they are undermanned or ill equipped to deal with fire alarm inspections.
4. I support the proper installation of fire alarm systems, improved training, NICET certification, and impartial and qualified inspections of alarm systems.
5. I don't support individuals who, for their own best interest, think that a single company or individual can sway the board of directors by withdrawing their support due to a single unfavorable event. (Hell, I myself would have to pull out of the AAF, and for now I'm the President).
6. I don't support the rumors that continue about the AAF promoting legislation that has been or is unfavorable to the alarm industry as a whole or for the benefit of a single company or group of companies. The AAF is still being "blamed" for the FASA/BASA training requirement by those who have no idea about it. I won't rehash those entire events now; it would take up this entire magazine. Did you ever see the commercial on TV by BASF? They say "we don't make the products, we make the products better!" The AAF doesn't make the laws, we make them better, or at least we try to, but in politics what goes in looking like a horse comes out a camel.
7. I'm tired of false alarms. The fire departments and the firemen are tired of false alarms. People are injured and killed by false alarms.
8. Our industry, nationally not just locally, has failed to regulate itself, so therefore someone else has stepped in to do it, and we don't like it. (I was in Alaska last month and I stayed in a motel in Anchorage. You think that their fire alarm installations are any better--- think again. Unlocked control panel, actually no lock on the cover at all, door wide open, smoke detectors covered in webs and dirt, and pull stations that only the Jolly Green Giant could reach, oh - and a battery dating back to the stone ages.)
9. I have 90 pages of proof about a fire alarm in a municipality that was in trouble for months. Reported it to UL's local representative. Reported it to the local fire department requiring the certificate. And for month after month nothing ever happened. Total lack of enforcement after the initial requirement so why have it at all.

*Column continues on page 7*

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*Positioned for Performance*

*Continued from page 5*

This brings me to a column a friend of mine wrote in this month's issue of Security Signal; New York Burglar and Fire Alarm Association's monthly magazine. In it he writes about the lack of enforcement for their state law. They have the same issue there we have here, a thousand miles away. And that brings me to another point that I really didn't think I'd touch in this month's column, the NBFAA. Several years ago the AAF played YO-YO jumping in and out of the NBFAA for reasons that I truthfully can't say I understood. Yes, they had their problems, and so do we. Theirs were more obvious trying to deal with 39 different state organizations and their leaders each with their own agenda because they simply couldn't separate their own state's needs with that of their national organization. Today my company is an individual member and I can't tell you when the last time I got a monthly magazine from them. Years later, same problems. When I was on the board, I complained, sometimes rather loudly (imagine that!!!) Today I'm not active, though I would like to be. To those members of the AAF who feel leaving the AAF while we are on the

upswing due to one issue of contention need to think again. You can't make it better that way.

Last month I promised to update you on a legal case that I was working on. Unfortunately I am not able to do so, because despite my involvement I don't know the outcome. Two days before the trial was to start, 4 years after the actual alleged break in, the case was settled along with a confidentiality agreement. So ends that.

What I can tell you is that the alarm company was not totally without fault. While I don't believe there ever was an actual burglary, that this was an inside job setup, the alarm company was on the hot seat for several years. (Not a member of the AAF, but duly licensed). Would the alarm have worked—most probably. Was it the best installation I've ever seen—by far No. Was it the worst installation I've ever seen—absolutely not.

The installation had several violations of good installation practice, while also having a number of wiring issues in direct violation of the National Electrical Code, NFPA 70. And while this was a burglar alarm installation, guess what... there was a third party inspection. It was by the Miami-Dade

electrical inspectors. They failed to find more than a dozen violations. Now understand, I'm not talking about motion coverage, or placement of a magnet on a door or window. That's outside their scope. I am referring to specific violations of the Code dealing with the installation and workmanship of the wiring:

1. Wires with open splices, no tape or "beensies".
2. Wires with splices directly in line and no junction box.
3. Wires running horizontally along the warehouse wall at about four feet in height without any protection.
4. Improper strain relief connectors on junction boxes
5. High voltage and low voltage with no separation.
6. And more.

I am in favor of third party verification, be it fire or burglar alarm systems. I'm just not thrilled with people who throw their weight around because they can and who know less than me.

Sincerely,  
**Roy Pollack**

*President, Alarm Association of Florida  
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# From The Director's Chair

## by Bob Neely, Executive Director

### "Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely"

*Lord Acton ~ Historian 1834-1902*

The legislative session for 2006 is finally over. A new law affecting alarm contractors has once again been put in the statutes. This year it makes it abundantly clear who is exempt from third party requirements. The issue became so complex it wound up involving six state agencies, fifteen trade associations, nine lobbyists and over sixty experts in their various fields with input and comment. You will find a list of these folks at the end of this article. And now that the legislative session is over, we must speak out.

Let us start with the largest elephant in the room; the quote at the beginning of this article. I sincerely hoped this topic would never arise in the discussion of these issues.

It is one thing for a municipal official to drive an agenda for what they perceive is the improvement of the public good. I want to believe that those well intentioned but sadly misinformed individuals are working for what they believe to be a legitimate end even though the means are totally without merit. Additionally no one wants to believe that anyone in a position of public trust would intentionally abuse the power of their office.

It is quite another matter when the official in question drives this agenda for private gain. However quite simply, it occasionally happens.

And as we predicted months ago the failed scenario of third party requirement leads to abuse and favoritism of a preferred nature. Sadly we have found that to be the case in at least one municipality. At best it is a conflict of interest; at worst it is a criminal act. Unfortunately the suspect action of one leads us to question

motives in all other municipalities as well. This finding now calls any of these policy decisions into question and all are now suspect until full investigations are completed statewide.

In the last three years there has been a dangerous trend occurring that has made alert flags go up all over Florida. Policy decisions have been made by certain public employees that have had devastating financial consequences for contractors and building owners. All of us as contractors have been put at one time or another in untenable monetary positions by public officials. These particular polices have wrought devastating fiscal consequences without the benefit of prior discussion and without any regard for the impact on the public, the contractors or the municipality in question. If those decisions had been put in proper public forum to be fairly and equitably discussed by the public, the contractors and the affected municipal commissions, that would be one thing.

But these have been instituted as administrative policies, unheard by the public and certainly not examined by any sort of commission. In other words they have been instituted by stealth. The end result is an illegal, unfunded mandate by government forcing building owners and contractors into impossible situations. Even if the motives were 100% pure in the intention, the end still does NOT justify the means. The goal is laudable; clean up the fire alarm industry; the means; 'one way or another'. And that is where we cannot agree.

The 'one way or another' part does not justify employing policies that put legitimate state licensed contractors out of business. There is an entire series of

laws, state statutes carefully crafted by the legislature and signed into law by the Governor that regulate and discipline fire alarm contractors under both F.S. Chapter 489 part II and F.S. Chapter 633 under a regulatory Board established in 1972 for that very purpose. To ignore this entire system is not only foolish; it is illegal under F.S. 455.

I will state unequivocally once again for the record (although my previous columns make this redundant) the Alarm Association of Florida has absolutely no quarrel with third party oversight or the code that is the current guide for those who care to properly interpret it. I now include the quote from a third party company I have used previously to underscore in the strongest possible terms the proper interpretation of this issue:

'UL's fire alarm certificate program does not require that only a UL listed alarm company can pull a permit for a system or install the system.' ~ Howard Hopper, Chief Engineer for Underwriter Laboratories, February 13, 2006, Florida Fire Chief's Association Office, Ormond Beach, Florida.

Additionally here are the relevant statutes that now pertain to this issue: 489.516 Qualifications to practice; restrictions; prerequisites.--

3) When a certificateholder desires to engage in contracting in any area of the state, as a prerequisite therefor, he or she shall only be required to exhibit to the local building official, tax collector, or other authorized person in charge of the issuance of licenses and building or electrical permits in the area evidence

*Column continues on page 11*

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Continued from page 9

of holding a current certificate, and to pay the fee for the occupational license and permit required of other persons.

(5) Notwithstanding any other provision to the contrary, a certified electrical contractor, registered alarm system contractor I, registered alarm system contractor II, or alarm system contractor I or alarm system contractor II that is a certified alarm system contractor is exempt from any local law, local ordinance, or local code that requires a contractor to be listed or placarded by a nationally recognized testing laboratory or to be certified by any regionally or nationally recognized certification organization. However, a county, municipality, or special district may require any such electrical contractor or alarm system contractor to provide, at the final inspection of a fire alarm system, the documentation required by NFPA No. 72, "National Fire Alarm Code," for installation and monitoring. This subsection does not prohibit a county, municipality, or special district from requiring

compliance with the Florida Fire Prevention Code or with NFPA No. 72.

489.537 Application of this part.--  
(1) This part applies to any contractor performing work for the state or any county or municipality.

3) Nothing in this act limits the power of a municipality or county:

(a) To regulate the quality and character of work performed by contractors through a system of permits, fees, and inspections which is designed to secure compliance with, and aid in the implementation of, state and local building laws or to enforce other local laws for the protection of the public health and safety. However, a certified alarm system contractor or certified electrical contractor is not subject to any additional certification or licensure requirements that are not required by this part.

Section 5 was added this year by the legislature and the Governor under 489.516 and makes it absolutely crystal clear under Florida licensing laws that legitimate contractors are exempt from

ANY specious requirements. Once again I point out that this law was added by agreement of the experts, state agencies and trade associations involved after a three month discussion of the issues and the facts, not the emotion and

the rhetoric. The legislature agreed and passed unanimously out of both houses the reaffirmation FOR THE THIRD TIME that state licensed contractors are qualified to install and monitor these systems under law by state license. Additionally this clarification of the law was instituted by the legislature to specifically preempt the scenario wherein abuse of the public trust had the potential to occur. And as you saw in my opening paragraphs the legislature has acted none too soon.

For those of you who were either unable or unwilling to comprehend the law before (even though it was clearly interpreted by the Attorney General) there is now no question about the fact in view of the action taken by the legislature and the Governor this session. Properly licensed contractors are exempt. What state lawmakers have done here is drawn a very specific line with this law. If you wish to license, regulate or discipline these contractors, you must do so through the existing provisions of state law under Chapters 489 and 633 in conjunction with the Department of Business and Professional Regulation and the Electrical Contractors' Licensing Board. That is why they were created and that is why they exist. Obey the law and use them for their intended purpose. It cannot be any clearer than that.

There is no organization in the state of Florida that is more painfully aware of the need for better standards in the fire alarm industry than the Alarm

Column continues on page 12



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*Continued from page 16*

Association of Florida. We have programs written by public safety officials from around the nation that can be instituted and that are statistically sound and proven. Several municipalities in Florida currently use them and in one case have reduced false alarm dispatches by 73%. We have trained and certified over 10,000 alarm technicians over the last ten years. If you have the courage to accept the help that is being offered by them and us, warts and all, we will step forward and do everything in our power to assist in the improvement of the marketplace. If you truly want to make a difference, join us in this effort.

We want and need to have this improvement at all levels. We must work together to move forward for the protection of the public and public safety. We cannot continue to work at odds with each other pulling in different directions. We urge all public officials to join with us using the existing laws in improving the industry across the State with the legitimate tools at hand, not for nine or ninety different individual municipal reasons, least of all for private gain. A uniform enforcement of the law is the only true answer to this dilemma.

The Alarm Association of Florida wishes to thank the following individuals for their comments, contributions and expertise in solving these issues:

- Alarm Association of Florida – Roy Pollack, Bob Worthy, Mary Galloway, Carl Davino, Ron Toole, Pat Cushing, Eric Prutsman (lobbyist)
- Associated Builders and Contractors – Rick Watson (lobbyist)
- Attorney General's Office – Charlie Crist
- Construction Coalition – All committee members
- Construction Licensing Officials Association of Florida – Bill Brod, J.B. Clark (lobbyist)
- Division of the State Fire Marshal –

- Rand Napoli, Jim Goodloe, Gabriel Mazzeo
- Department of Business and Profession Regulation – Simone Marstiller, Secretary
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- ECLB past Chairpersons– Arnaldo Abreu, Michelle Poole, James Williams, Gerry Lewis
- False Alarm Reduction Association –John Moorhouse, Alachua County Sheriff's Office
- Florida Association of Electrical Contractors Janice Ficarratto, Mike Cauthen, Rocky Sneed, Rick Watson (Lobbyist)
- Florida Electrical Workers Association – J.B. Clark (lobbyist)
- Florida Fire Chief's Association – Larry Scovotto, Mark Souder, Stuart McElhaney, Julius Halas, Chris Weir Eric Prutsman (lobbyist), Melanie Phister (lobbyist)
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- Florida Police Chiefs Association - Amy Mercer, (E.D.)
- Independent Electrical Contractors – Dave Shepp (lobbyist)
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers – J.B. Clark (lobbyist)
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- National Electrical Contractors - Association Reggie Harrington (E.D.), Jeff Sharkey (lobbyist), Richard Pinsky (lobbyist)

- National Fire Protection Association – Olin Greene
- Office of the Governor – The Honorable Jeb Bush
- Security Industry Alarm Coalition – Glen Mowrey, Ron Walters, Stan Martin
- Underwriters Laboratories – Howard D. Hopper, Peter Tallman, Kari Hebrank (lobbyist)
- State of Florida Agencies -6 / Trade Associations – 15 / Lobbyists -9 / People – 50+ individuals

If I have omitted anyone from this list it is purely unintentional and I apologize in advance for the error. Please contact me if I have committed this oversight and I will correct the omission in upcoming issues.

**Bob Neely – Executive Director**  
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# Tri-Ed Traveling Security Show

## A Success By Any Measure

Several months ago Kevin McCaffrey, branch manager at Tri-Ed, Clearwater called me and suggested an idea. "What would I think of reinstating the traveling security show?" he asked. I thought it was brilliant and told him so. For those of you too young (or inexperienced) to remember, the distributors and manufacturers used to provide a small table top show that moved city to city to coincide with the AAF regional meetings.



KEVIN MCCAFFREY OF TRI-ED

On July 20, 21 and 23, 2006 Tri-Ed sponsored three meetings in Fort Myers, Sarasota and Clearwater respectively wherein the local dealers had the opportunity to come in and spend some one-on-one time with some terrific vendors and their technologies. At the same time right after dinner the AAF held a regional briefing on state issues.



KEVIN (hidden 9th from left) AND THE CREW OF VENDORS WHO SPONSORED THE TRAVELING SECURITY SHOW

The Alarm Association of Florida would like to thank Kevin and his Tri-Ed staff, Regional Directors Sherry Lucas and Roy Krueger and all the participating vendors who made this event such a great success. Thanks also to the local dealers who came to support this effort, learn some tech and enjoy an evening out.

**Bob Neely, Executive Director, AAF**

# AAF Pensicola Region Meetin Notes

## July 26, 2006 Attendees:

Ron Toole, Crime Prevention, Doug Bennett, Cen-Signal, Gene Miller, Cen-Signal, Bob Pitts, Cen-Signal, James Edwards, AFPS, Jim Cheisan, Alarms Unlimited, Caralee Gibson, GSC Systems, Nate Siegwart, GSC Systems, Bob Suhreinrich, Panhandle Alarm, Olivia McDaniel, Wiregrass, Ed McDaniel, Wiregrass, Jim Dirkes, SentryNet

Meeting was called to order by Ed McDaniel at 6:35 PM. Ed McDaniel introduced himself and went over what the meeting will be on tonight. Reading of the minutes from the May 25, 2006 meeting were read and voted in as correct.

Ed reported that at the last AAF Board Meeting they took steps to improve the FASA/BASA initial and continuing education courses and also they are looking to start a major curriculum on a level similar to that of the electricians.

The possibility of taking NTS 1 to satisfy both Florida and Alabama law was first brought up in January. Ed reported that AAA apparently still hasn't done anything about it.

A discussion came up that even if you do or don't have FASA/BASA there is no one in the Panhandle Area that enforces violations of companies doing any wrong doings. Ron Toole stated that they are starting to have classes for the inspectors so they will know what to look for and what to ask. The group was also informed that if anyone wishes to file a complaint they can go on line and do this with their name or be anonymous.

Ed informed the group that Linda Neely asked him to inform the members that the AAF course for license holders scheduled for August 15-16 in the Pensacola Region has been re-scheduled for August 19-20.

Ron Toole informed the group that they should go on line and check to make sure they have all of their CE's completed because who ever does not will not be able to get a renewal this year. Bob Suhreinrich stated he has done this and paid on line and has received his new card.

Ed reported a discussion among AAF board members about a licensed contractor working for an unlicensed contractor. He said it is okay to work directly for the property owner or directly for a licensed contractor but other than that may be illegal. He said it can be difficult to ascertain whether a third party has contracted with the owner to do the work or is merely acting as agent for the owner in obtaining a contractor to do the work. He handed out copies of Bob Neely's e-mail reporting the opinion of the ECLB attorney on the distinction.

Ed discussed the CSV-01-2004 and how the standard verification was that only one call was made and that enhanced verification was when either an additional call is made or another form of verification is done (e.g. two way voice, video verification, electronic verification, or cross zoning). He reported the change in F.S. 489 that took effect on July 1.

Caralee Gibson opened a discussion on how they have started to work with Cox Cable in helping them understand that when they are installing Voice over cable in a customers home the importance of keeping the line seizure and testing the alarm system before and after the installation is complete. Caralee has written a step by step outline of what needs to be done and gone over this with Cox Cable. It was asked that if Cox Cable is working on the phone lines inside of a customer's home do they not need to be licensed to do this? This is going to be researched and reported back to the members. It was also suggested that Alarm Companies should be notifying their end users of the importance of having a Pots line and that if they have a commercial fire system that voice over cable is not an UL approved method of transmission. It was stated that once someone gets hurt or dies that is the only way that the industry will start to pay attention to the problems that have come up with voice over cable and voice over internet.

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM by Ed McDaniel.

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