

First Alert 'SOARS' into second decade of success

Gathering focuses on changing landscape and RMR opportunities

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Photo courtesy Honeywell

(Left to right): Kenneth Weinstein, senior vice president Program Marketing, Honeywell Security & Communications; Joe Sausa, president of First Alert Professional Security Systems; Joe Nuccio, president and CEO of ASG Security; Ron Rothman, president, Honeywell Security & Communications; and M. Greg McLochlin, director, Dealer Development Group present Nuccio the Medal of Honor.



Photo courtesy Deborah O'Mara

Honeywell's Ron Rothman captivated the audience at the FAP conference with his spot-on talk of the future of technology.

"The phone lines are truly going away. Consumers are making the choice of mobile and the cell phone is the way they get information and services." — Ron Rothman, president of Honeywell

First Alert Professional (FAP), one of the oldest continuing running authorized dealer programs in the country, celebrated 20 years with style at its annual convention in San Diego in late November. Thousands of dollars in product giveaways and prizes, as well as the presentation of numerous awards and accolades marked the three-day networking and educational event, but the overriding message and theme was the rapidly changing security industry.

From discussions on the demise of POTS lines to new avenues of recurring revenue with mobile communication technology, wireless and software apps, the convention was fine-focused on how systems integrators can position themselves to take advantage of the morphing landscape--and how FAP and Honeywell will give them the tools to do just that. FAP includes some 350 dealers in 500 locations in the U.S. and abroad. (Visit www.firstalertprofessional.com.)

"There's no other program in the industry that's been around for 20 years," said Joe Sausa, president of First Alert Professional Security Systems at the opening general session kicking off the event. "It's important moving forward for us to find the right partner in the integrators and that we deliver quality technologies and products to them," he said. "While fire, life safety and security are critical and core to the dealer's offerings, integrators have to focus on providing services that help consumers protect their possessions, like flat screen televisions, computers and other 'stuff,'" Sausa added.

Honeywell Security & Communications President Ron Rothman reiterated the company's commitment to providing new technologies and services for integrators that will position them for the future. He presented recent research indicating how the emphasis is on protecting the contents of the homes as well as its occupants.

Call to action

"We don't have a choice," Rothman said. "We have to change or we are going to be left behind," he told the audience. "Some 35 percent of the homes right now are cell phone primary, and in the age group of 25 to 30, some 42 percent are cell phone only. These are the people who are going to be your customers in the future. The phone lines are truly going away. The consumers are making a choice and the cell phone is their mobile choice to get information. In fact, some 40 percent of the phones being sold today are now what's considered mobile computing devices," he said.

Rothman pointed to dramatic consumer market changes as the harbinger of days to come. "The technology trends we are witnessing are representing the future. If we stay with digital dialers we will lose. We can leverage what the cell and broadband carriers have done to deliver the content our customers want. This will be a major investment for Honeywell in the future, especially sensors and detectors and video products that can deliver that content. With the investments we've chosen to make we can offer more value to our dealers. The reality is that we're afraid to call our customers to upgrade them to new services, but if you don't do it, someone else will; your competitor, and you will lose."

-Sidebar

Highlights of FAP Gathering

Here's a quick rundown of some of the high points of the conference:

John Bourque of HB Alarm received a special 20-year recognition award. "The past 20 years have allowed us to network; one of the strongest assets of the First Alert program," Bourque said. Bourque was one of the dealers who initially gathered in Chicago 20 years ago to bring the dealer program to fruition.

The ever-popular Total Connect program will add IP video to its offerings in January 2010 while extending the program deeper into the world of video analytics. Total Connect Video Services are currently undergoing beta testing and will allow users to view streaming video at 25 to 30 frames per second.

Wireless outdoor cameras will be introduced in the second quarter of 2010 and two-way voice is also on the roadmap for next year.

The #1 priority of the AlarmNet program will be to get a new fire control communicator based on GSM radio to the market in 2010.

The New Face of RMR: Hosted Services

The recent Axis Communications Inc. Channel Partner Convergence Conference in Austin, Texas, sponsored by the Chelmsford, Mass.-based network camera manufacturer gave the industry a bird's eye view of the future--and that future is in hosted video solutions. Axis announced a new endeavor called the Axis Video Hosting System (AVHS) Partner Program during the event.

AVHS is a platform for creating hosted video solutions with the benefit of very easy installation of the network cameras, addressing the complexity of communicating through some routers and networks. This is solved via a solution called "one-click" meaning that adding a camera is virtually as easy as clicking a button and entering the serial number of the camera on a specific Web site, in order to get surveillance up and running in a remote location in minutes, according to Fredrik Nilsson, general manager at Axis.



Two solutions available

The AVHS is a platform which Axis' partners can use to either become a Video Hosting Partner (VHP) creating solutions for hosting the video, or a Video Service Partner (VSP) providing a monitoring solution for the end-users. Several partners have already created solutions based on the platform, and as hosted services are growing in consumer and IT applications, it is also expected to become a more important solution in the security industry in the coming years.

SIA Revamps NPS Web Portal and Program

And now for something completely different, the Security Industry Association (SIA) has completely overhauled not only its New Product Showcase (NPS) Web site (www.sianps.com) but has also revamped the categories for the long-running program.

Now celebrating its 30th anniversary, the NPS was established to recognize innovative products, services and solutions in electronic physical security. Technologies showcased through this program are used in the protection of life and property in residential, commercial and institutional settings.

Over the summer and into the fall SIA administration, committee members and judges worked on refining and revising the program and categories to reflect new technologies, products and services in the industry. But in addition, and an overriding consideration, was the goal to bring the NPS awards program to more fully reflect the way the industry is changing, with a new emphasis on convergence, integration and total systems solutions, according to Patricia Sherwood, marketing manager for SIA. For example, new categories have been added in Convergence Solutions, Integrated Software, Products and Systems, Wireless and more.

The 2010 New Product Showcase program is scheduled for March 23 to 24, 2010 at the Sands Expo and Convention Center in Las Vegas. Check the NPS Web site for application forms and deadlines for the 2010 program, as well as a complete listing and description of categories.

Customized Training

The American Society of Industrial Security (ASIS) recently launched a Contract Professional Development Program to provide customized training to companies and end users in the security industry. Some of the corporations who have contracted with ASIS include Caterpillar; IPC International; Wachovia; and U.S. military branches and government agencies.

With this new program, organizations can have the convenience and benefits of hosting their own contract professional development programs at a location and date of their choice. Users can select from existing classroom or computer-based programs or work with ASIS education staff to develop a program to meet their specific training requirements. Some of the classroom programs include physical security, applications and technology, vertical market security, crisis management and much more. Computer based program focus on CCTV, biometric technology and also certification online reviews.

For more information, go to www.asisonline.org or correspond or telephone ASIS at education@asisonline.org or (703)518-1429.

ESA Votes "No" on H.R. 3962

The Electronic Security Association (ESA), Irving, Texas, is taking a stand against the passing of HR 3962, the "Affordable Health Care for America Act." Already passed through The U.S. House of Representatives the act would change the way Americans receive their health care coverage. ESA opposes H.R. 3962 because it fails to reduce the growth in healthcare costs and health insurance and threatens to hamper the economic recovery.

"We're encouraging all of our members to vote 'no' because we feel that it's going to be a major impact on us as employer and employee relationships go," explained Mike Miller, president of ESA. "Because when you start talking about how you're going to have the employee mandates and how it's going to be paid for, that affects the employer and the employee in the long run."

Key concerns ESA has include:

- Employer mandate tied to a punitive "pay-or-play": H.R. 3962 combines an employer mandate with a "pay-or-play" tax. Aside from the overly prescriptive tests an employer who provides coverage must meet, the payroll tax penalties threaten both those who

do and do not provide coverage.

- Surtax: 75 percent of small businesses are structured as pass through entities and pay their business taxes at the individual level. More than one-third of small businesses employing 20 to 250 employees would face the tax. Finally, since the tax is not indexed for inflation, the effect of the tax will creep downward, making more and more businesses vulnerable to a tax increase.
- Payroll tax penalty: This legislation requires that all employers with a payroll of \$500,000 or more pay a payroll tax of up to eight percent if they do not provide "qualified" health insurance to their employees.
- Public option: A government-run plan cannot compete fairly with the private market, and ultimately is funded on the backs of small businesses.
- Big benefit package and more mandates: Small employers typically pay 18 percent more for their healthcare. The benefit packages in H.R. 3962 are far more "benefit rich," according to the ESA, than plans offered in today's marketplace and also require some small employers to provide additional benefits that go beyond the scope of current federal law.
- A recent Congressional Budget Office (CBO) report revealed that \$1.67 billion would be realized through penalties on employers and individuals. As the cost of the government programs grow, so too will the financial burden placed on small businesses in the form of more penalties, fees and taxes, according to the ESA.