

False Alarms Discussion

LAS CRUCES POLICE DEPARTMENT



ALARM ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

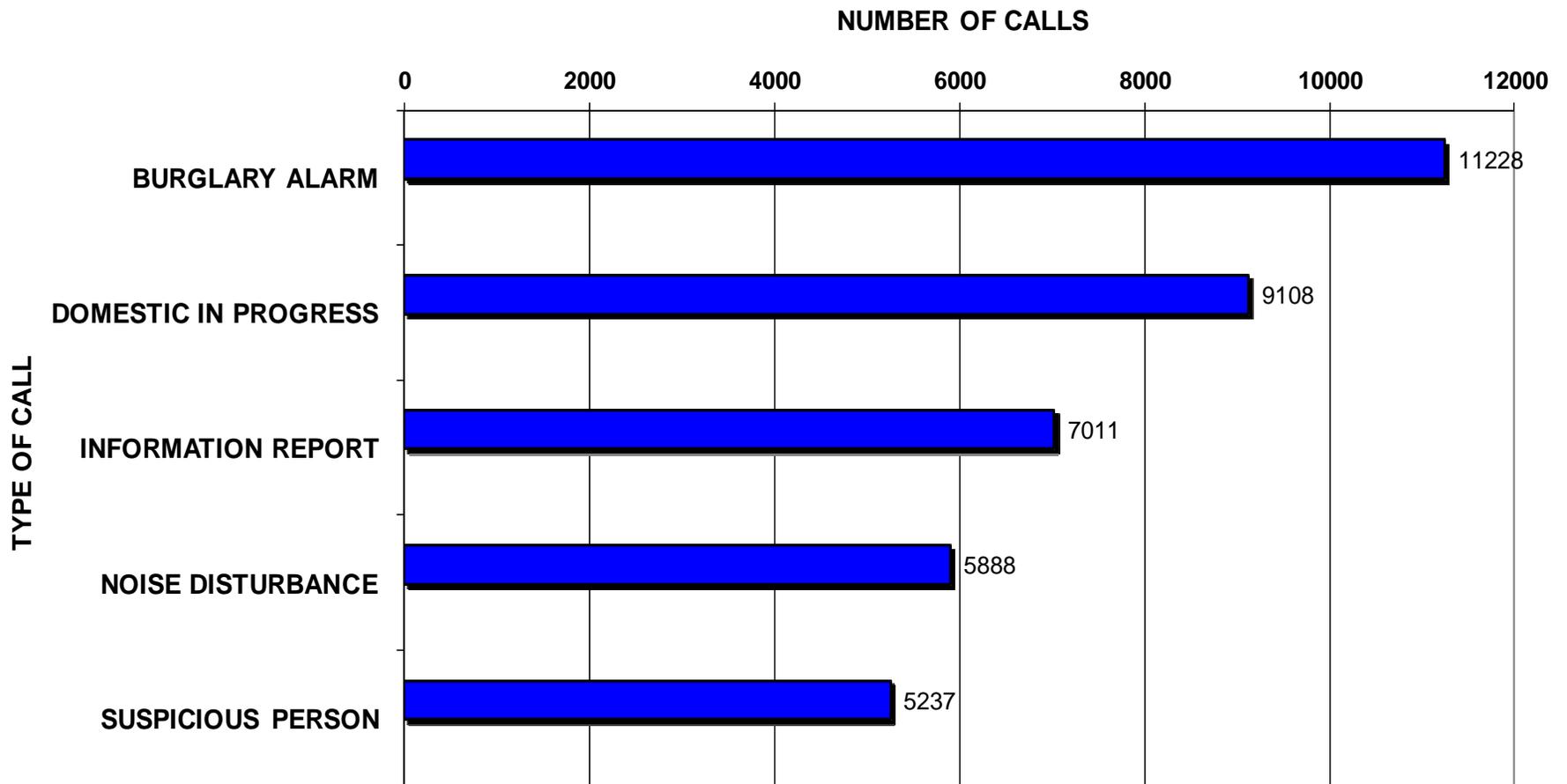
LT. SEAN KEARNEY

THE PROBLEM

- As of 11-22-11 LCPD has received 11,228 burglary alarm calls YTD
 - Single most common call for service at ~8% of total (*source-TIBURON CAD data*)
- Of the 11,228 alarm calls, 5,171 were not dispatched due to cancellations; 100% of these are false which negatively impacts Central Dispatch
- Of the remaining 6,057 calls which were dispatched:
 - Only 45 of these calls were actual crimes or incidents requiring a report; 5 arrests made including one of an RP with drugs on his person
- This equals 99.6% false alarms overall, which is typical of the national average
- OFFICER SAFETY may suffer through complacency developed from responding to countless false alarms

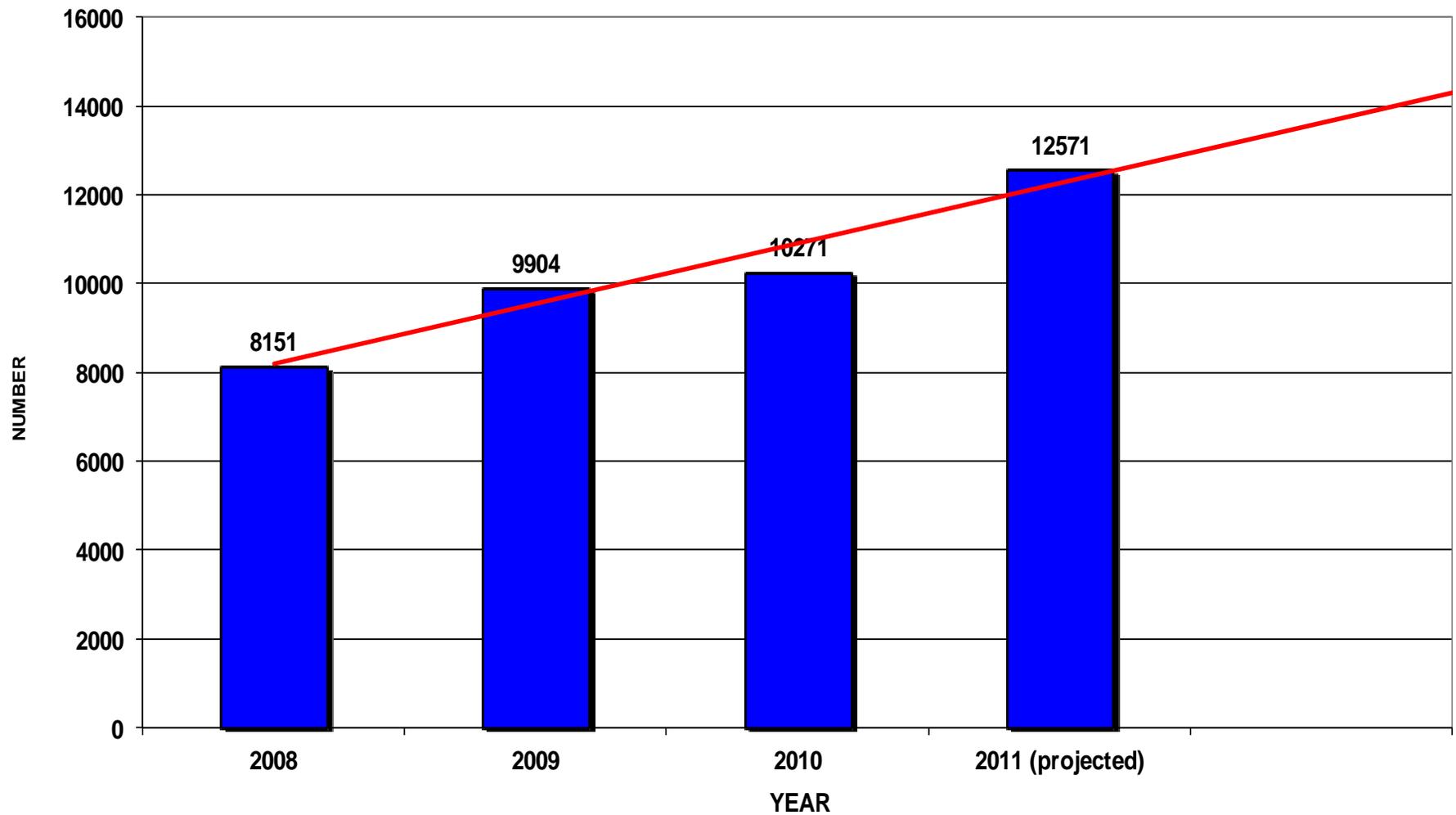
THE PROBLEM

LCPD TOP 5 CALLS FOR SERVICE JANUARY TO NOVEMBER 2011



THE PROBLEM

LCPD ALARM HISTORY



CAUSES OF FALSE ALARMS

- User error
- Faulty equipment
- Faulty installation
- Weather/ phone/ electrical issues

- None of these are a public safety responsibility...

THE COSTS...

- At 1 man hour and \$40 for each response (LCPD, dispatch, and vehicle costs, conservatively estimated):
 - \$502,840 in manpower and equipment costs (2.5% of entire LCPD budget) per year
 - \$100,568 expended for each arrest made on burglary alarm responses YTD...
 - At \$45,000 salary, this equates to over 11 patrol officers' labor cost for the entire year which has had no value to the public at large but yet has already been paid for with the existing budget
 - 11 officers is 12.5% of LCPD's patrol force which could be utilized for other tasks
 - In terms of time, this equates to over 6 officers handling burglary alarms FULL TIME (2,080 hours per year)

SIMPLE FACTS

- ALL of these responses have been the result of a public entity servicing a private contract (example: buy a new pickup truck; service it at City warehouse)
- An estimated 20 percent of the population has been tasking 100 percent of the taxpayers to service this contract with near ZERO benefit to the public at large
- Due to the overwhelming amount of false alarms common sense dictates that response to unverified alarms is neither an efficient nor effective use of our limited resources.

SOLUTIONS?

- “Model states” ordinance-registration of alarm systems and escalating fines/ fees for abusers
 - Costs borne by City to track, bill, train, and collect from an ever-changing pool of users
 - Would require 1 to 3 FTE for City (\$30-120k per year depending upon necessity for supervision, job title and/ or collateral duties)
- Alternative-outsource 30-40 percent of revenue stream (Crywolf or similar); 80 % collection rate
 - Self-funded at best unless program is structured to reflect actual costs, which constantly rise
 - Public opposition to fees/ fines/ appeals

SOLUTIONS (continued)?

- Projected reductions-varied results; 45 percent over 5 years while sheer number of alarm responses continues to grow is typical. Is this good enough?
- Officers' time for unnecessary non-criminal responses will never be recovered
- Is it the City's obligation to attempt to fix a private industry issue at further expense to the 80 percent of the population (or more) who do not use alarms?
- If this strategy is effective, why is it not done by the alarm industry already in order to increase their own efficiency?

VERIFIED RESPONSE SOLUTION

- Officers will respond if there is audio, video, or personal verification of criminal activity
 - Alarm and/ or private security companies would be encouraged to perform this task for a reasonable cost
 - Enhanced business opportunities/ jobs
 - Human-activated alarms (panic, duress, robbery, and medical) as well as fire alarms would continue to be serviced as normal, although ~99% of these continue to be false as well
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- **Effectiveness**- >90% immediately and indefinitely
 - **Response times** for priority and non-priority calls will improve
 - **Cost=ZERO TO US:** Cost is shifted back to the private security industry and alarm companies

FIRE DEPARTMENT FALSE ALARMS

- No requirement for 1-2 family dwellings to install fire alarms
- 2006 International Fire Code (IFC) requires fire alarms in several commercial occupancies
- Las Cruces Municipal Code Section 11-34 allows for enforcement of IFC

FIRE DEPARTMENT FALSE ALARMS

- From January through November the Fire Department responded to 977 False Alarm calls.
 - 623 false alarms
 - 175 1 or 2 family dwelling
 - 445 Commercial
 - 34 malicious false alarms
 - 2 1 or 2 family dwelling
 - 32 Commercial

FIRE DEPARTMENT FALSE ALARMS

- Continued:
 - 99 system malfunction alarms
 - 25 1 or 2 family dwelling
 - 74 commercial
 - 221 unintentional alarms
 - 52 1 or 2 family dwelling
 - 169 commercial

FIRE DEPARTMENT FALSE ALARMS

- We have modified our response to minimize impact from false alarms
- We are currently evaluating our response to all calls for service to include false alarms
- We will continue to monitor the False Alarm calls and make adjustments as needed.

OPTIONS

- Do nothing and allow the problem to continue impacting public safety and the community
- Tracking and and/ or penalizing false alarm abusers by the City
 - Example: False Alarm Unit
- Outsource to Crywolf or similar entity
- Verified Response for Burglary Alarms
 - Mandatory Private Security response?

QUESTIONS??

