



Illinois Electronic Security Association

309 E. Rand Rd., #107 | Arlington Heights, IL 60004 | (630) 305-8800

May 25, 2011

Mayor Susan E. Low
City of McHenry
333 South Green Street
McHenry, Illinois 60050

RE: MCHENRY ALARM ORDINANCE HURTS BUSINESS – RIGHTS STRIPPED AWAY

Mayor Low:

As mayor for the City of McHenry, I question the due diligence you performed prior to the decision to allow the local government to use taxpayer dollars in order to duplicate alarm-monitoring infrastructure already built by the private sector. You have saddled your constituents with a plan that calls for a single company to do all system installation and servicing for commercial fire alarms. Additionally, all commercial alarms systems must now be monitored by the fire-protection district's monitoring station.

The consequences of this community-impacting decision include:

- Businesses will pay more to have additional equipment installed at their premises.
- Businesses will ultimately pay for the additional receivers and dispatch equipment at the government's monitoring center.
- Businesses will pay higher monitoring fees than if they could select a private-sector alarm company in a free-market fashion.
- Newer fire alarm system will be "dumbed-down" by an already decade-old technology that will be used by the government-run monitoring center for an additional decade or two.
- Strip malls and other multi-tenanted locations will pay dearly. Each address will have to have its own equipment rather than using addressable panels commonly used today – more money spent.

The leadership and rank-and-file members of the fire services are unquestionably heroes for the work they do on a daily basis. However, they are making fundamental errors in their quest to balance their budgets. They should not be allowed to set up a monopoly and make decisions that decimate the private-sector alarm industry in order to claim its revenue stream. Without doing the proper due diligence, (the public safety issues cited are non-existent) people working outside of their core competency have made decisions that will harm the McHenry-area business community for many years to come.

- Business owners lose the opportunity to bundle services together for a reduced cost.
- Licensed alarm agencies with customers in the fire protection district are cut out of the loop.
- Every customer relationship security professionals fostered for decades will end with no compensation being paid.

Keep in mind, there are much better solutions to balance budgets than to "take over" a private industry. Your position as Mayor tasks you with the responsibility to look at the "big picture" and to keep issues in their proper perspective. Requiring McHenry businesses to pay higher equipment costs and fees and allowing your public sector staff to set up a monopoly and use tax dollars and legislation to unfairly harm the private sector is NOT what you have been charged to do. I would like to meet with you to discuss these issues and I invite you to tour Emergency 24 (my employer) to see first-hand what a monitoring facility is like. Please contact me at 1-630-305-8800.

Sincerely,

Kevin Lehan
Executive Director