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False Alarm Update: California, Texas

Nov 04, 2005, PALO ALTO, Calif. -- A new movie memorabilia museum has yet to open in Palo Alto, Calif. — not because its exhibits aren't ready or the paint has yet to dry, but because police won't respond to alarms at the facility because of a no-response policy for excessive false alarms. During the construction of the Stanford Theatre Gallery, eight false alarms were triggered during a three-week period in May. Palo Alto's alarm ordinance specifies that police won't respond to an intrusion alarm for a year after six false alarms within a 12-month period.

The gallery is ready to open its doors, but won't because of the lack of police response, according to the *Palo Alto Weekly*.

The facility — run by David W. Packard, son of the co-founder of Hewlett Packard Co. — was also fined \$1,450. An appeal to the city was rejected, but the termination of police response was changed from one year to six months.

In his letter of appeal to the city, Packard said he himself was responsible for two of the false alarms because the alarm contractor failed to inform him that the security code had been changed. He also said the two false alarms were still counted against him despite his calling the police department and verifying with it that the alarms were false.

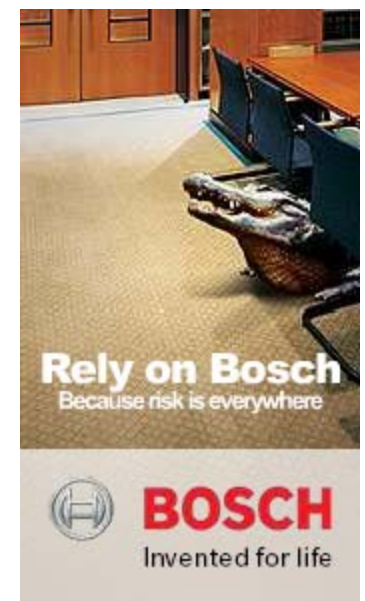
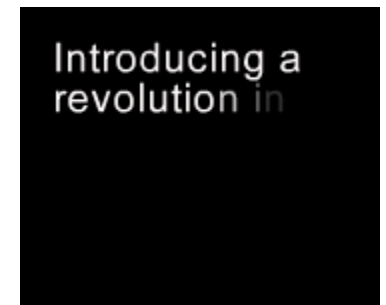
According to the *Palo Alto Weekly*, the city toughened its alarm ordinance in October 2001 with a \$35 permit required for police to respond to systems and the permit being revoked after six false alarms in a year. Police say false alarms in Palo Alto are down 40 percent since they instituted the ordinance.

In other false alarm news ...

PASADENA, Texas: A new ordinance now in effect in the city near Houston requires permits for home and business fire alarms and institutes stiff fines for false alarms.

The ordinance by the Pasadena Fire Marshal's Office, according to *The Pasadena Citizen*, allows an alarm

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owner two false fire system alarms in a year before fining \$100 for each of the next two false alarms. The fifth through 10th false alarm warrants a \$200 fine and any after that will be \$500 each.

PALM SPRINGS, Calif.: The Southern California desert resort city is considering raising its fines for false alarms according to television station KESQ. The new ordinance would allow one “free” false alarm per year, then charge between \$100 and \$200 for each successive false alarm. Currently, Palm Springs allows two false alarms in a year before instituting fines between \$40 and \$100.

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