

## President's Vision

A portrait of a middle-aged man with white hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and striped tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is dark.

**Membership Works**  
*But Not Without You!*

## Membership Works, But Not Without You!

By Marshall Marinace, President

I am so proud to be the newly elected president of the Electronic Security Association (ESA), the leading and foremost association serving the electronic security industry. From our executive director/CEO, executive committee and vice presidents, to everyone on the staff, our focus is on delivering exceptional service and value to our members.

As with my predecessors, we are constantly on a mission to accomplish more – to provide additional value to our member companies, some 2,400, to help them grow their businesses and become a formidable force in providing professional electronic security and life safety services to residential and commercial customers.

### Association challenges can be met

Associations are unique organizations. They depend on their members to guide the organization and its numerous committees, taking time from the day-to-day of running a business to volunteer for the greater good of the industry. And it isn't easy. Most of the member companies of ESA are small businesses. It's difficult to take time out from running operations or helping a customer to do work for the association, but it can be done.

I understand these challenges and pain points. I've been running my 35-year-old company, Marshall Alarm Systems Inc., based in Yorktown Heights, N.Y., while logging time as the former president of the New York Burglar and Fire Alarm Association (now known as the New York State Electronic Security Association) and the regional alarm association, among others. Of course, at ESA we have a wonderful and super-capable staff – but they can only do so much. They



Marshall Marinace (center) swears in as the 2014-2016 ESA president at the Annual Meeting held during the 2014 Electronic Security Expo (ESX) in Nashville, Tenn.

depend on your participation to move the organization forward.

Across the country, nonprofit associations are at a pivotal point to remain relevant, while working tirelessly to provide the kind of targeted value they need to grow. At this year's ESA Leadership Summit in January, attendees had the privilege of hearing keynote speaker Mary Byers, CAE and author of "Race for Relevance," talk about how associations can chart a course to ensure continued viability and growth. The initiatives she pointed out may work for our organization, and the executive committee is working to analyze and implement these initiatives to ensure ESA is more nimble, flexible and adaptable, so we too can remain relevant. A great opportunity to get more involved is to attend the 2015 ESA Leadership Summit, scheduled for February 8-11. Please mark your calendar now.

After 28 years of being involved in associations, it's an honor and privilege to lead this progressive organization. I want to thank the membership in advance for their ongoing support during the next two years. And I want to pick up where our previous leaders have left off. I'm excited about our three new vice presidents, Angela White, Dee Ann Harn and Chris Mosely, and the fresh perspective they bring to the executive committee. Inside, our staff continues to do a great job.

Several years ago, past president Dom D'Ascoli established departments with vice presidents of training, membership, sales and marketing, communications and public relations and finance and administration. Executive Director & CEO Merlin Guilbeau continues to stay on top of industry issues and guide the staff in critical decision making. ESA standing committees have gone through some changes to make their work more efficient and focused. I am looking

forward to working with our members, volunteers and staff to raise the bar and position ESA for continued success well into the future.

## **Vision for ESA**

My vision for the organization is rooted in this statement: Membership works. But that's only true if you participate and take advantage of everything ESA has to offer. It's important that our members know just what we do. One way to keep up with our activities and current issues is through our magazine—*Security Nation*, our e-newsletters—*ESA Integrator*, *Government Insider*, and *NTS News*, as well as through ESA press releases, member alerts, emails and webinars. For those that want to take it one step further and roll up their sleeves, I'd love to hear from you as it relates to a committee that you would like to join.

We have six critical strategic initiatives for the association. Strategic initiatives are long-range plans that tie to ESA's overall mission and vision to "lead the electronic life safety, security and systems integration industry for the benefit of our members, consumers and public safety." We continue to fine-tune these directives to make our organization more relevant to the industry and our members.

Below are our six strategic initiatives and my thoughts on each as I begin my presidency.

## **1. Training and Certification:**

**"Identify, develop, deliver and certify professional education for the electronic life safety, security and systems integration industry."**

To me, training is our most valuable member benefit and ESA stands tall as the leading provider of classroom, online courses and certifications for our evolving security and life safety industry. We have witnessed numerous technological innovations over the last several years, with IP networking and communications changing practically overnight. This change makes it quite different from the coursework we originally presented to members and their technicians when we began the National Training School in the mid '80s.

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To address these ongoing changes, we continue to develop and deliver new courses and improved delivery methods. We reach out to expert manufacturers in the field to provide vendor-agnostic technology coursework, training about 4,500 students – your employees – every year. In addition to training the industry, ESA is also working on programs to expand the labor pool and establish a uniform level of education and training for every technician. I'm extremely excited about the fact that we are expanding our training and certification programs while we keep our ears to the ground in order to develop courses pertaining to the changes happening today and anticipated

tomorrow in all areas of electronic security and life safety.

## **2. Government Relations:**

**"Effectively advocate and communicate on behalf of our members before Congress, federal regulatory agencies, and, as requested, at state and local levels."**

It's ESA's goal to remain vigilant when it comes to local, state and federal legislation. Our work in government relations is more important than ever, especially with the issues of alarm communications, the elimination of POTS lines and the ongoing transition to more modern means of alarm communication such as next-generation cellular, GSM radio and whatever new technologies will be coming our way. It is essential that we keep our members informed regarding the upgrade of millions of alarm communication devices, whether phone lines or radios, in the near future.

We continue to monitor federal and state legislation that impacts the way we do business, such as municipalities entering the fire alarm monitoring business. Our monthly state legislative reports give chapters and members the information you need to stay on top of these issues. We recently developed a legislative coalition with other related industry associations and members of ESA to monitor important legislative issues such as licensing and telecommunications. Our annual Day on Capitol Hill continues to be a popular event where, for the last nine years, members communicate security industry concerns directly to congressional leaders. I encourage you to get involved and plan to attend the 2015 Day on Capitol Hill scheduled for May 4-5 in Washington, D.C. ESA's



Director of Government Relations John Chwat continues to serve as our lobbyist in Washington, D.C. where he works with government officials and agencies to promote important initiatives such as school security and a program where ESA will become a training provider and employment channel for veterans.

ESA maintains a strong bond with CSAA, SIA, CEDIA, and other related associations, sharing common ideas and goals so that when we need to go to Capitol Hill on legislative issues we arrive as a united front.

members do not have the time and resources to do all of the research, so we do it through our hard-working committees, professional groups, staff and, of course, the Alarm Industry Research and Educational Foundation (AIREF), which redesigned its website, AIREF.org. Members can stay on top of technology issues through ESA's website, ESAweb.org, and our publications, white papers, webinars and press releases.

Alarm communications is the most important issue facing our industry today. From GSM radios to digital

along with John Chwat, ESA's director of government relations, keep a watchful eye on regulations, providing members with new information as it becomes available. The legislative aspect is just one facet because many different and even parallel industries and technologies can ultimately have an impact on the electronic security and fire alarm industry.

## 4. Public Awareness:

**"Effectively promote the professionalism and expertise of our members to consumers, public safety officials and regulatory agencies."**

Public awareness is an important part of being a member of ESA. We want consumers to know who our members are and hire us instead of non-members. To that end, we're constantly promoting the professionalism of ESA members through social media such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube, as well as online resources and print publications. We have worked diligently to become the consummate consumer resource for security industry news and trends through our consumer-facing website, Alarm.org.

Alarm.org is the place for consumers to find information about purchasing an alarm system and locating professional member companies. This past year alone we produced 66 press releases that resulted in some 3.2 million views by consumers. We are regularly and consistently approached by reporters and others as the "go-to" resource and industry expert. Through our communications team, we develop timely consumer-related articles for publications and for member companies to use in their marketing efforts.

Additionally, ESA has always made it a priority to give back to our



Ron Petrarca (left) and ESA President Marshall Marinace (right) spoke with Rep. Steve Israel (D-NY) earlier this year at ESA's Day on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.

## 3. Technology and Emerging Issues:

**"Identify industry issues and communicate their potential impact on our membership."**

This is one of the most important and consistently changing initiatives at ESA. Technology drives the alarm industry and as industry professionals we must stay one step ahead of the market. We realize that many of our

dialers and the sunset of POTS, we keep you aware of how changes will affect the way you do business. Today we are working closely with telcos, internet service providers and the IT industry to ensure we are all on a level playing field and providing quality services to our customers and subscribers.

Additionally, the Alarm Industry Communications Committee (AICC),



ESA President Marshall Marinace (left) pictured with past president Dom D'Ascoli (right) at ESX in Nashville, Tenn.

public safety officials whenever and wherever we can. ESA and its chapters have awarded \$457,000 since 1996 to children of police and fire personnel, through the ESA Youth Scholarship Program. The essays we receive from the sons and daughters of first responders are impressive and touching, and the program continues to bond our relationship with public safety so that we can all work together to make our communities safer.

We can all be proud of how ESA makes a positive difference in the world around us. Since the formation of ESA Gives Back three years ago, we have focused on contributing to worthy causes and nonprofits. Substantial contributions were made to the Wounded Warrior Project in 2012 and the Warrior Dog Foundation in 2013. This year we are supporting Mission 500 whose mission is to provide lifesaving assistance for children in need and communities in crisis around the world. ESA volunteers and staff will be traveling to Mexico later this year to support this worthy cause. The 2014 ESA Gives Back Mission Trip is scheduled for October 26-30 and will focus on a sanitation project to give families

in the San Luis Potosi region clean, uncontaminated water.

## **5. Codes and Standards:**

**“Enhance public safety by proactively monitoring, influencing and developing codes and standards that affect electronic life safety, security and integrated systems.”**

When many of us think of codes and standards, we zero in on fire alarm systems, which are critical to life safety. But today, codes and standards apply to much more than fire systems. Codes and standards are being developed for many vertical markets in technology categories such as security, video surveillance and access control. Our proactive codes and standards committee is made up of some of the most knowledgeable people in the industry who monitor a host of different code making organizations that continue to propose changes that may ultimately affect your business. In addition to developing the ESA Electronic Security Guidelines for Schools, ESA is also working with SIA to promote best practices and standards for school security.

ESA is also an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accredited standard-writing organization, and has representatives on committees of both the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and International Code Council (ICC). I believe that if we can grow the membership with more security and fire integrators and supplier companies as well as increase our presence at NFPA and ICC meetings, we can influence the changes to existing codes and standards to the benefit of life safety.

## **6. Organizational Excellence:**

**“Operate a world-class association that serves our members by delivering exceptional value.”**

This initiative really sums up who we are and how we plan to serve the industry while providing added value to members. ESA's executive committee and staff run as a first-rate business constantly looking for ways to expand our services and grow membership. In addition to training, networking opportunities, lobbying efforts, information on current trends, and positive industry public relations, we also offer insurance through Security America Risk Retention Group (RRG). Security America RRG offers general liability including errors and omissions insurance specifically tailored to meet the needs of electronic life safety, security, and systems professionals.

### **Growing chartered chapters**

ESA's chapters are an integral part of everything we do. They provide members with the information and services needed on a local basis and also represent your interests on a national level. One of my goals is to establish chapters in states where we currently have none. With ESA



providing a roadmap to build those new organizations, I know we can build a strong, nationwide presence. Remember: Our strength is in numbers. With a network of chapters and strong membership, we can accomplish more together than we can individually.

## The future

As we look to the future, and as the association grows, we need to accept change, just as you do in your business. We need to be flexible and ready to make adjustments. Looking back on my nine-plus years as vice president, I sometimes stop and ask myself: 'Is our governance model structure best suited to enable the association to be nimble, flexible and adaptable to respond to member needs and the opportunities and challenges that face the industry?'

This is an example of some of the questions I will be discussing with the executive committee and you as we move forward. I would also like you to think about it and share your thoughts with me.

## Leadership Summit Keynote Speaker Mary Byers outlined five changes that associations must consider to stay relevant:

1. Overhaul the governance model and committee operations
2. Empower the CEO and enhance staff expertise
3. Rationalize the member market
4. Rationalize programs and services
5. Build a robust technology framework

These five changes are key to our value as an association. I encourage you to read "Race for Relevance." Once you do, you will see how it relates to ESA and why WE need to continue to adapt and make changes to stay relevant. Our roots go back to our NBFPA predecessors who started the organization in 1948 around a casual conversation in Chicago. And today, ESA has evolved into the largest professional trade association in the industry.

ESA has made dramatic strides in its representation of the industry and I'm looking forward to working with

each of you to make even more of an impact. Association membership works – but not without everyone's participation and support. Let's work together to make membership work for you. Please feel free to contact me any time at [President@ESAweb.org](mailto:President@ESAweb.org) or 972-807-6829.

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Marshall Marinace (second from left) stands with the newly-elected ESA officers Angela White, two-year vice president (left), Dee Ann Harn, one-year vice president (second from right), and Chris Mosley, two-year vice president (right), at this year's ESX.