SCOTTS BLUFF COUNTY, NEBRASKA

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNTY OF SCOTTS BLUFF, NEBRASKA, REGARDING REGISTRATION OF ALARM SYSTEMS, ESTABLISHING ANNUAL REGISTRATION FEES APPLICABLE COUNTYWIDE, ESTABLISHING FALSE ALARM PENALTIES APPLICABLE ONLY IN THE UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF SCOTTS BLUFF COUNTY, RECOGNIZING THE SCOTTS BLUFF COUNTY CONSOLIDATED COMMUNICATIONS CENTER INTERLOCAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT, AMENDED, PROVIDING FOR ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT, AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF SCOTTS BLUFF, NEBRASKA AS FOLLOWS:

WHEREAS, the County Board of Commissioners of Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska, has authority under Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 23-103 and 23-104(6) to exercise the powers of the county and to do all acts in relation to the concerns of the county necessary to the exercise of its corporate powers; and

WHEREAS, the County Board finds that a program requiring the registration of alarm systems and the assessment of registration fees and false alarm fees is necessary to defray the administrative costs associated with processing alarm calls, to reduce the incidence of false alarms, and to encourage proper maintenance and operation of alarm systems; and

WHEREAS, the County Board finds that alarm systems monitored by private third-party security companies may generate requests for law enforcement, fire and EMS response through county dispatch, and that an alarm registration program is necessary to identify alarm users, maintain current contact information, and defray administrative costs associated with such registration and related dispatch coordination; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §23-187(l)(f), the County may regulate, through ordinance, false alarms from electronic security systems that result in requests for emergency response from law enforcement or other emergency responders; and,

WHEREAS, the County Board further finds that false alarm penalties are an appropriate local regulatory tool for areas within the County that are not governed by the separate municipal false-alarm ordinances of the City of Scottsbluff and the City of Gering; and

WHEREAS, the County, the City of Scottsbluff, and the City of Gering are parties to the Scotts Bluff County Consolidated Communications Center Interlocal Cooperation Agreement, Amended (the "Interlocal Agreement"), which provides for consolidated communications and dispatch services for the County and the cities, and which contemplates that the County may maintain monitoring-related fees countywide while false alarm enforcement and penalties within the cities shall remain under the cities' ordinances and the Interlocal Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the County Board has held the requisite public hearing after due notice as required by law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNTY BOARD OF SCOTTS BLUFF COUNTY, NEBRASKA:

Section 1. Purpose.

The purpose of this Ordinance is to require registration of alarm systems that generate requests for law enforcement response through county dispatch, establish an annual registration fee applicable to all such alarm systems within Scotts Bluff County (including the corporate limits of the Cities of Scottsbluff and Gering; except it shall not apply inside any other municipal corporate boundaries in which those cities have been granted or are exercising powers by ordinance on the same or similar subject matter), establish false alarm penalties applicable only in the unincorporated areas of the County (outside the corporate limits of the Cities of Scottsbluff and Gering), preserve the County's authority to administer its registration program, and recognize that false alarm fees in Scottsbluff and Gering remain with those cities under their ordinances and the Interlocal Agreement.

Section 2. Definitions.

As used in this Ordinance:

A. “Alarm company” means a business providing alarm sales, installation, service, monitoring, billing, or the service of receiving emergency signals from alarm systems and thereafter relaying the message by authorized means to the County communications center.
B. “Alarm system” means any device used to detect or prevent intrusion, criminal activity, or other emergency situations which causes notification to be made directly or indirectly to the County communications center for law enforcement response. An alarm system shall not include an alarm installed on a motor vehicle.
C. “Alarm user” means the person or entity who purchases, leases, contracts for, or otherwise obtains an alarm system and thereafter contracts with, or hires an alarm

company, to monitor or service the alarm device, or who owns or operates an alarm system.
D. “Coordinator” means the designee of the County to administer and enforce this Ordinance. (Scotts Bluff County Communications Center)
E. “County” means Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska.
F. “False alarm” means an alarm signal that results in a response by law enforcement and is not caused by criminal activity, fire, medical emergency, or other actual emergency, but does not include an alarm signal determined by the County to be excused under the procedures adopted by the County Board.
G. “Interlocal Agreement” means the Scotts Bluff County Consolidated Communications Center Interlocal Cooperation Agreement, Amended, as may be amended from time to time.
H. “Monitoring” means the process by which an alarm company or its designated alarm answering service receives signals from an alarm system and relays an alarm dispatch request to the County communications center for the purpose of summoning law enforcement to the alarm site.
I. “Principal” means the person, firm, or corporation whose premises are protected by an alarm system. If a building having more than one tenant is protected by a single alarm system, the term principal means the alarm system owner.
J. “Registration term” means a 12-month period beginning on the date of issuance of the alarm system registration and ending 12 months thereafter.

Section 3. Registration Required; Countywide Application; Responsibility for Fee.

A. No person shall operate or maintain an alarm system within Scotts Bluff County that generates requests for law enforcement response through county dispatch without a current alarm system registration issued under this Ordinance. This registration requirement applies countywide, including within the corporate limits of the Cities of Scottsbluff and Gering, where alarms are monitored and dispatched through the County's communications center pursuant to the Interlocal Agreement.

B. The alarm user shall be responsible for the registration of the alarm system and for the payment of the required annual registration fee to the County.

C. The County may accept registration applications and fees submitted by an alarm company or monitoring company on behalf of the alarm user, and an alarm company or monitoring company may collect and remit the registration fee from the alarm user to the County.

D. Where an alarm company or monitoring company collects and remits the registration fee, the company shall provide the County with documentation sufficient to demonstrate that the fee was collected from the alarm user, upon the County's request.

E. Nothing in this Section shall relieve the alarm user of the legal obligation to ensure the alarm system is properly registered and any required fees are paid.

F. The annual registration fee established by this Ordinance shall take the place of and replace the monitoring fees previously imposed by the County. No monitoring fee shall be assessed or collected by the County after the effective date of this Ordinance, and the registration fee shall be the sole fee imposed by the County for the registration and related administrative services associated with alarm systems.

Section 4. Initial Registration; Renewal.

A. Each alarm user shall obtain an initial registration within thirty (30) days after installation or activation of an alarm system, whichever occurs first.

B. Registration shall be renewed annually and the annual registration fee shall be due at the time of renewal.

C. The County may authorize an alarm registration contractor to process applications, collect fees, and maintain records on behalf of the County.

Section 5. Application; Required Information.

Each applicant for registration shall provide the information required by the County, which shall include at a minimum:

a. The name, address, and telephone number of the alarm user;
b. The name, address, and telephone number of the alarm company or monitoring company, if applicable;
c. The address of the premises protected by the alarm system;
d. Emergency contact information for at least one and preferably more responsible persons who can respond to the premises; and
e. Any other information reasonably necessary for administration of the registration program.

Section 6. Annual Registration Fee Amounts.

A. The County Board shall establish by resolution the annual registration fee for alarm systems.

B. The fee may be set in different amounts for residential, commercial, industrial, governmental, or other classes of alarm users as determined by the County Board.

C. The fee is due at the time of registration and upon each annual renewal.

D. No registration shall be issued or renewed until the required fee is paid.

Section 7. Issuance; Term; Transfer; Termination; Renewal.

A. Upon receipt of a completed application and payment of the required fee, the County shall issue a registration number or confirmation.

B. A registration shall expire 12 calendar months from and after the date of their issue unless renewed.

C. A registration is not transferable to another alarm user or another premises. An alarm system registration shall automatically terminate upon any change of the principal or protected premises. No refunds will be given on termination of any alarm system registration for any reason.

D. A late penalty shall be assessed on all alarm system registration holders who do not pay the renewal fee prior to expiration of their existing alarm system registrations as follows: $10 for payment received within 31-59 days after expiration; $15 for payment received within 60-89 days after expiration; $25 for payment received 90 days or later after expiration. The renewal application shall contain the principal's signed statement that there have been no changes in the principal or protected premises.

Section 8. False Alarm Penalties; Unincorporated Areas Only.

A. False alarm penalties shall apply only in the unincorporated areas of Scotts Bluff County, outside the corporate limits of the City of Scottsbluff and the City of Gering. Nothing in this Section shall apply false alarm penalties within the corporate limits of those cities.

B. A false alarm means an alarm signal that results in a response by law enforcement and is not caused by criminal activity, fire, medical emergency, or other actual emergency, but does not include an alarm signal determined by the County to be excused under procedures adopted by the County Board.

C. Upon the first false alarm within a registration term, the County may issue a warning or no-charge notice. Upon the second and subsequent false alarms within the same registration term, the County may impose a penalty established by resolution or ordinance of the County Board.

D. The County Board may establish escalating penalties for repeated false alarms within the same registration term, using the following schedule unless amended by future ordinance:

1. First false alarm:	$ 0.00.
2. Second false alarm:	$100.00.

3. Third false alarm:	$100.00.
4. Fourth and subsequent false alarm:	$250.00.
5. Late fee for each delinquent false alarm invoice:	$ 25.00.

E. An alarm user who has been assessed a false alarm fine may appeal the assessment of the false alarm to the Alarm Review Board which shall be compromised of the members of the 911 Advisory Board. The alarm user shall file a written appeal to the Alarm Review Board by setting forth the reasons for the appeal within 10 days after the receipt of the false alarm fine notice. In making its decision, the Alarm Review Board can take into account items it believes to be relevant, including severe acts of nature, but may uphold the appeal only if there was no false alarm or if the false alarm was not contributed to by the act(s) or omission(s) of the user and/or its family, pets, guests, employee(s), and/or invitees. The decision of the Alarm Review Board is final as to administrative remedies of the County.

F. The false alarm penalty schedule in this Section shall not apply within the corporate limits of the City of Scottsbluff or the City of Gering, where false alarm fees and enforcement shall continue to be governed by those cities' ordinances and the Interlocal Agreement.

Section 9. Administration.

The County may adopt forms, procedures, and administrative rules consistent with this Ordinance for the orderly administration of the registration program and false alarm penalty program.

Section 10. Enforcement.

A. Failure to obtain or renew a required registration may be enforced by civil citation, administrative penalty, or other lawful remedy adopted by the County Board.

B. Failure to pay a false alarm penalty may be enforced by civil citation, administrative penalty, or other lawful remedy adopted by the County Board.

C. Each day a violation continues may constitute a separate offense or violation if so provided by County resolution or ordinance.

Section 11. Severability.

If any section, subsection, sentence, or clause of this Ordinance is held invalid, the remaining provisions shall not be affected and shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 12. Effective Date.

This Ordinance shall be effective at its passage, approval and publication according to law.

PASSED AND APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2026.

_____
CHAIRPERSON

(SEAL)

_____
COUNTY CLERK