



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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COKER CREEK, TENNESSEE, RESIDENT INDICTED
ON FOURTEEN COUNTS OF ARSON

Held Without Bond Pending Hearing on August 14, 2007

KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE—John Wesley Irons, age 60, of Coker Creek, Tennessee, was arraigned today before Magistrate Judge H. Bruce Guyton on fourteen counts of arson related to the burning of land in the Cherokee National Forest, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 844(f)(1) and (2), and Title 18, United States Code, Section 1855. Each count under Title 18, United States Code, Section 844(f), carries a maximum sentence of not less than seven years and not more than forty years imprisonment, a \$250,000.00 fine, not more than five years supervised release, and a \$100.00 special assessment. Each count under Title 18, United States Code, Section 1855, carries a maximum sentence of not more than five years imprisonment, a \$250,000.00 fine, not more than three years supervised release, and a \$100.00 special assessment.

His arrest comes after more than ten years of investigation of arson in the Cherokee National Forest by USDA-Forest Service, the Tennessee Agricultural Crime Unit, the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, the Tennessee Arson & Bomb Task Force, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Mr. Irons is currently being held in Knoxville without bond pending a detention hearing on August 14, 2007, before Magistrate Judge Guyton.

Information regarding any arson fires that have occurred in the Coker Creek-Tellico Plains area can be provided confidentially to the Arson Hotline at 1-800-762-3017 or by contacting your local law enforcement agency. Any additional information is welcomed.

Members of the public are reminded that an indictment constitutes only charges and that every person is presumed innocent until their guilt has been proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

For more information, contact James R. Dedrick, United States Attorney, Assistant United States Attorney J. Edgar Schmutzer, or Public Information Officer Sharry Dedman-Beard at (865) 545-4167.