



News Release



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ATF NRT ACTIVATES TO CIRCLEVILLE

CIRCLEVILLE, Ohio — The National Response Team (NRT) from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), along with agents from the ATF Columbus Field Division, entered into the investigation of the large commercial fire occurring Sept. 22 at Mason's Furniture, a historic landmark, in Circleville. The Ohio State Fire Marshal and the Circleville Fire Department requested ATF's help.

NRT Special Agent in Charge Guy Thomas said the structure that occupied nearly a city block, located on North Court Street, was completely destroyed. Early estimates put damages at approximately \$2 million. The Midwest Region NRT will begin arriving in Circleville today.

This is the 19th NRT activation in fiscal 2008 and the 658th since the program began in 1978. Other agencies involved in the investigation are Ohio Division of State Fire Marshal and the Circleville police and fire Departments.

Since 1978, ATF's NRT has brought definitive expertise and an array of state-of-the-art equipment to the investigation of major fires and explosives incidents. Four regional components, organized geographically to cover the United States, comprise the NRT. The team can respond within 24 hours to assist state and local law enforcement or fire service personnel in on-site investigations.

The responding NRT component normally has 13-18 members, including veteran special agents who have post-blast and fire origin-and-cause expertise; forensic chemists; explosives enforcement officers; fire protection engineers; accelerant detection canines; explosives detection canines; as well as intelligence, computer forensic and audit support. A fleet of fully equipped response vehicles strategically located throughout the United States provides logistical support.

ATF's partnership with federal, state and local officers is vital to the effective processing efforts at an explosives or fire scene. The NRT capitalizes on that by working alongside its partners in reconstructing the scene, identifying the seat of the blast or the origin of the fire, conducting interviews and sifting through debris to obtain evidence related to the explosion or fire.

In addition to investigating hundreds of large fire and explosives scenes, the NRT was deployed to the 2001 terrorist attack on the Pentagon, the Olympics and other major sporting events in the United States, presidential inaugurations and national political conventions, and major international conferences.

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