
Message from the Director

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) protects our Nation and its citizens from the threats of violent crime and terrorism, and this annual report describes our accomplishments during fiscal year 2003. The past year brought many internal and structural changes, as ATF completed its realignment as a bureau within the Department of Justice with responsibility for enforcement of the Federal criminal laws relating to alcohol, tobacco products, firearms and explosives.

Though the new additional threat of terrorism has arisen, violent crime still endangers the lives and property of Americans, and ATF remains committed to holding the line against domestic violent criminals. ATF is a crucial partner in the Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) initiative, and continues to fight violent crime through its Integrated Violence Reduction Strategy, providing invaluable resources to law enforcement, such as the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network and the National Tracing Center.

Explosives and firearms have proven to be preferred tools of the terrorist. By regulating the explosives industry and investigating explosives-related crimes, ATF helps safeguard the American public against the malicious misuse of explosives. ATF is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities as regulator of the explosives industry, along with additional new responsibilities under the Safe Explosives Act. The Act is intended to reduce the availability of explosives to felons and other prohibited persons, and it requires that all persons obtaining explosive materials obtain a Federal permit.

We at ATF take quite seriously our responsibility to act as good stewards of the resources given us by Congress, and to gain the most value for the American people by working effectively with other agencies. ATF's management accountability systems are in compliance with the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act and with standards set by the General Accounting Office. We place great importance on our relations with other law enforcement agencies, and are proud to have built effective partnerships across the country. ATF continues to share its expertise with others, providing training in explosives, arson, and many other areas for Federal, State, local, and international partners.

I was delighted, though not surprised, to hear that in a recent OPM survey, ATF ranked 8th in a survey of the best workplaces within the Federal Government. Ultimately, ATF succeeds in its mission because of the dedication and expertise of its employees. I am proud of their achievements, and honored to have served as their Director.



Bradley A. Buckles

