



# News Release



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## ISLAMIC CENTER OF JOPLIN FIRE CAUSE REMAINS UNDETERMINED

### *Enhanced Photo of July 4 Arson Suspect Released*

August 16, 2012

JOPLIN, Mo. -- The FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the Jasper County Sheriff's Office and the Missouri Division of Fire Safety's Office of the State Fire Marshal have completed the on-scene investigation into the cause of a fire at the Islamic Center of Joplin. The fire occurred at 1302 S. Black Cat Rd. on Aug. 6 at approximately 3:40 a.m. The center, which was unoccupied at the time of the fire, sustained a total loss.

Investigators completed several days of an extensive scene examination. The scene investigation involved reconstructing the scene, conducting numerous interviews and sifting through debris in an attempt to locate evidence related to the incident. At this time, the official cause of the fire is "undetermined." A finding of undetermined does not mean that a fire investigation is closed. If additional information is developed, this finding can be changed. Investigators are actively following all leads and request the public to report any information about the fire. The factors resulting in the finding of undetermined are not being released due to the ongoing investigation.

The FBI, ATF, the Jasper County Sheriff's Department and the Missouri Division of Fire Safety are providing significant resources to the investigation. FBI Special Agents and ATF's Springfield Office responded to the scene. In addition, ATF dispatched a Certified Fire Investigator (CFI) to the scene. CFIs are highly trained special agents, who provide technical support, analysis and assistance to its state and local partners in the areas of fire origin and cause determination and arson investigation.

Recently, a \$15,000 reward was announced by the FBI and the ATF for information leading to the arrest and indictment of the person or persons responsible for the fire at this center on July 4, 2012. Individuals with information about either of these fires are encourage to contact any of the agencies investigating these incident or utilize the FBI's toll free number 1-800-CALL-FBI. Additionally, investigative resources have been utilized to enhance the photo image captured of the suspect from the July 4 fire. Law Enforcement firmly believes these enhanced photographs can assist in the identification of this suspect.

It is too early in the investigation to determine if these two incidents are related. Law enforcement remains committed to investigating the attempted arson of July 4, the identification of the suspect depicted in the surveillance video and the continued investigation into the fire on Aug. 6. Surveillance video, press releases and enhanced images of the suspect from the July 4 fire are available at <http://www.fbi.gov/kansascity>.



This case is being investigated by the FBI, the ATF, the Jasper County Sheriff's Office and the Missouri Division of Fire Safety. Law Enforcement is requesting the assistance of the public in this matter. Anyone with information regarding these fires is requested to contact:

- FBI: 1-800-CALL-FBI
- Jasper County Sheriff's Office: Detective Tim Williams (417) 358-8177, ext. 1223
- ATF: (417) 837-2100 or 1-888-ATF-FIRE
- Missouri Division of Fire Safety Arson Hotline: 1-800-392-7766

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#### **Media Contacts:**

FBI: Public Affairs Specialist Bridget Patton, 816-512-8200

ATF: Special Agent/PIO Trista Frederick, 816-559-0724

Jasper County Sheriff's Office: Sheriff Archie Dunn, 417-624-1601

Missouri Division of Fire Safety: Mike O'Connell, Mo. Dept. of Public Safety Communications

Director: 573-751-4819