



News Release



For Immediate Release

Nov. 9, 2011

ATF NATIONAL RESPONSE TEAM ACTIVATED TO APARTMENT FIRE IN MANHATTAN

MANHATTAN, Kan. - The National Response Team (NRT) from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), along with ATF special agents from the Kansas City Field Division, have joined the investigation of an apartment complex fire that occurred at 4th St. and Leavenworth at the request of the Manhattan Fire Department. The fire was reported at approximately 2:38 a.m. on Nov. 6, 2011.

The Strasser Village Apartments is a 96 unit apartment building that was under construction. The damage to the structure is considered a total loss. Dick's Sporting Goods and other nearby businesses also sustained fire, smoke and water damage. Damage estimates for the apartment building and nearby businesses are undetermined at this time. ATF's National Response Team (NRT) members arrived yesterday and will initiate scene investigation today. The fire is being jointly investigated by the Manhattan Fire Department, the Riley County Police Department, the Kansas State Fire Marshal's Office and ATF.

Manhattan Fire Chief Jerry Snyder said, "Our fire crews did an outstanding job of containing this fire, especially in light of the weather conditions and the extent of the fire upon their arrival. I greatly appreciate the assistance from Riley County Emergency Medical Services and the Riley County Police Department during this incident. I am also thankful for the resources that ATF, the Riley County Police Department and the Kansas State Fire Marshal's Office are lending to this investigation."

"This fire has caused considerable damage to multiple businesses. However, without the Manhattan Fire Department's swift response, the impact could have been even more devastating," said ATF Assistant Special Agent in Charge Jeff Fulton. "ATF is proud to partner with the Manhattan Fire Department, the Riley County Police Department and the Kansas State Fire Marshal's Office to investigate this incident."

The presence of the NRT in itself does not indicate that a fire is suspicious in nature. The NRT is often requested in instances where a fire scene is unusually complex, results in a high dollar loss or fatality or requires equipment and expertise that the state and local agencies may not have the resources to provide. The responding NRT component normally has 13 to 18 members, including special agents who have fire origin-and-cause expertise; forensic chemists; fire protection engineers; accelerant detection canines and additional support services.

Once requested, the team can respond within 24 hours to lend ATF's expertise to state and local law enforcement or fire service personnel. The NRT consists of three regional components, organized geographically to cover the United States. ATF's partnership with federal, state and local departments is the key to an effective fire scene investigation. The NRT works alongside its partners in reconstructing the scene, identifying the origin of the fire, conducting interviews and sifting through debris to obtain evidence related to the fire.

The NRT has brought expertise and state-of-the-art equipment to the investigation of major fire and explosives incidents since its inception in 1978. This is the 3rd activation of the NRT in fiscal year 2012 and the 724th since the program began.

More information on ATF and its programs is available at www.atf.gov.

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