

NEWS RELEASE

**The Ohio
Department of Commerce**

**Ted Strickland, Governor
Kimberly A. Zurz, Director**

For Immediate Release
January 28, 2009

Contact: Shane Cartmill 614-752-7179
or Cara Keithley 614-644-7115

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

STATE FIRE MARSHAL RULES DELAWARE EXPLOSION ACCIDENTAL

Investigators with the Division of State Fire Marshal's (SFM) Fire & Explosion Investigation Bureau and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), along with the Delaware Fire and Police Departments and Liberty Township Fire Department, today announced that Tuesday's residential explosion and fire was accidental.

The explosion, which occurred at 12:28 p.m. at 147 Cheshire Street in Delaware, injured two people, destroyed one home and damaged two others.

A team of investigators examined the on-scene evidence and conducted interviews throughout the day yesterday and were able to rule out all intentional and criminal acts. Investigators say they could not rule out a malfunction of the natural gas delivery system into the home as a possible cause. Representatives from the utility providers and insurance company will conduct additional testing at a later date.

"Thanks to a cooperative effort with the Delaware Fire and Police Departments, the Liberty Township Fire Department and the ATF, we were able to quickly and confidently determine this was accidental explosion and fire," said State Fire Marshal Michael P. Bell. "We are thankful that two citizens were able to safely walk away from this incident despite the devastating loss of their home."

SFM responded to the scene with three investigators, a supervisor and its Major Incident Response Vehicle (MIRV) to assist the ATF and the local authorities in the joint investigation.

Marshal Bell also took the opportunity to remind citizens to heat their homes safely this winter. He encouraged everyone to have their home heating system checked by a professional if they suspect any problems or malfunctions. In addition, he asked that citizens use space heaters sparingly and keep them at least three feet away from anything that can burn.

Delaware Fire Chief John Donahue reminded all citizens to have working smoke detectors and a carbon monoxide detector in their homes. It is recommended that each home have at least one working smoke detector per floor and inside each sleeping area.

###

www.com.ohio.gov