



# ATF News

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives  
St. Paul Field Division

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For Immediate Release  
March 20, 2007

## **ATF NATIONAL RESPONSE TEAM ACTIVATED TO LARGE RESIDENTIAL FIRE IN WISCONSIN**

SHEBOYGAN, Wis. – The National Response Team from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) along with ATF special agents from several states have entered the investigation of a large unfinished residential building fire that occurred March 19 at the Landmark Square senior living center at the request of the Sheboygan Fire and Police Departments.

Bernard Zapor, special agent in charge of ATF's St. Paul Field Division, said that the 151,614 square foot structure, which was located at 832 N. 6<sup>th</sup> Street and still under construction, was destroyed and early estimates of damages are in excess of \$13.25 million.

ATF's National Response Team (NRT) has brought definitive expertise and an array of state-of-the-art equipment to the investigation of major fire and explosives incidents since 1978. 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 onsite 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; and 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 most effective processing efforts at an explosives incident or fire scene,” Zapor said. “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.”

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

This is the 12th NRT activation in fiscal 2007 and the 630th since the program began in 1978. Other agencies involved in the investigation are the Sheboygan Police and Fire Departments and the Wisconsin State Fire Marshal's Office.

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