



ATF News

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
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ATF NATIONAL RESPONSE TEAM ACTIVATED TO BURLINGTON, IOWA, CHURCH FIRES

BURLINGTON, Iowa – The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Midwest National Response Team along with ATF special agents from the Des Moines and St. Louis field offices have been called in to investigate two church fires that occurred yesterday in Burlington.

One fire destroyed the First United Methodist Church, located at 421 Washington Street. The church was built in 1888 and has significant historical value to the city of Burlington. Total restoration was recently completed and the church was currently insured for \$6 million. On the same morning, Burlington police and fire responded to the First Presbyterian Church at 321 North Fifth Street, where smoke alarms were activated by a self-extinguished fire in the church sanctuary. Both churches are close to one another.

ATF will be conducting the investigation with the Burlington Police Department and Fire Marshal's Office, Iowa State Fire Marshal's Office, Iowa State Patrol Crime Scene Investigation Team, Des Moines County Sheriff's Department and Davenport Iowa Police Department's Canine Unit.

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 and fire personnel in conducting thorough investigations. Each team is composed of veteran special agents who have post-blast and fire origin-and-cause expertise; forensic chemists; explosives enforcement officers; fire protection engineers; accelerant and explosives detection canines; and intelligence, computer forensic and audit support.

ATF is the federal agency with jurisdiction for investigating major fires and crimes of arson. More information on ATF and its programs is at www.atf.gov.

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