
Director's Message

The sensitive products that lie at the core of the mission of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) bring careful scrutiny of our actions by all concerned. At ATF, we use the strict accountability that flows from this scrutiny to make a better agency that is responsive to the American people. Our serious approach to accountability is reflected in the ways we manage our financial and other resources, and in the efficient and effective programs we deploy to carry out our statutory responsibilities. In performing our important and often dangerous mission, the men and women of ATF are dedicated to reducing violent crime, collecting the revenue, and protecting the public. In a clear demonstration of this dedication and commitment, this year we received our sixth Unqualified Audit Opinion.

Fiscal Year 2000 proved to be the gateway to a year of e-based commerce in government. ATF followed a pioneering path of instituting technology-based programs that facilitate our mission. This action covered not only our law enforcement and regulatory mission, but encompassed many of our administrative functions. We were pleased to roll out a new accounting and financial management reporting system. In this bold step towards the future of government and business, we entered into a partnership with the Department of the Treasury's Financial Management Service to develop methods for the electronic filing of tax payments and returns making it easier to conduct business with us. We are proud of these initiatives which demonstrate our willingness to work with all of our customers.

Through technology, Fiscal Year 2000 also presented many opportunities to display ATF's experience and excellence in the arenas of alcohol, tobacco and firearms enforcement. A web database was introduced containing all Certificates of Label Approval (COLAs) issued after January 1, 1996. With more than 110,000 COLAs on-line, alcohol industry members and the public are now able to view label applications. With the implementation of the Federal firearms licensee eZ Check system, we have strengthened our working relationships with industry and can further protect consumers. We also were able to encourage our law enforcement partners at the Federal, State, and local levels everywhere to "follow the gun," by instituting Online LEAD and requesting that all evidentiary firearms be traced.

An indication of the efficiency and efforts of ATF is noted in our growing budget and the use of the resources we are appropriated by Congress. Land was cleared for our National Laboratory and Fire Research Center and we finalized site selection for our new Headquarters facility. We are proud to have implemented a pay-banding system for several series of positions that will focus a rating and appraisal system and enable us to hire and retain the best and the brightest chemists, fire protection engineers, and computer specialists. In addition, our budget has allowed for greater hiring, done in part through the initiation of the Special Agent Recruitment Center and the implementation of "Schedule B" hiring plan for special agents.

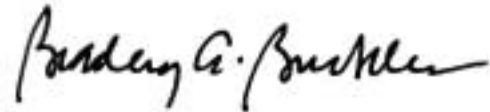
The preceding year has been one of growth and achievement. I am proud of the work accomplished by the men and women of ATF. We strive for excellence and are always willing to accept the challenges that accompany our



mission of reducing violent crime, collecting revenue, and protecting the public. We are proud to meet the challenges and opportunities for continued growth with innovation, hard work, and the spirit of determination.

This annual accountability report is one of many reports that ATF has issued over the past few years, sending a strong and open message to the public and our customers. By this report, we are asking the public and the citizens we protect and work for to review our mission, and be clear about our purpose, our policies, and our projects. Only through a thoughtful and meticulous accounting of our actions, revealed in this report and others we have produced over the years, can the public be best served and knowledgeable about this Bureau. It is an honest and rigorous business practice that demonstrates the high standards the men and women of this Bureau proudly follow.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Randolph A. Buckler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "R".