Major Challenges Facing ATF

At the beginning of fiscal year 2000, ATF faced a number of challenges, including the calendar year 2000 conversion (Y2K), which was of universal concern. A more immediate concern was the conversion of the accounting system from the mainframe-based Financial Management Information system (FMIS) to the client-server-based Financial Resource Desktop System (FReD). ATF was also involved in a pilot of a Treasury-wide human resource system. In addition, looming on the horizon was the prospect of obtaining approval on a new ATF Headquarters building and the ground breaking for a new National Laboratory Center (NLC).

ATF successfully met the challenge of implementing the new accounting system; had no glitches during the Y2K rollover; and encountered few problems in its participation in the human resources pilot. The objectives associated with the new ATF Headquarters building and the NLC are intact and moving forward. Ultimately, the new facilities will improve morale, and in the case of the NLC, provide a platform for new performance challenges for future ATF programs.

New Buildings Projects

Initiatives and final congressional authorization leading to new technologically upgraded and safer facilities for the Bureau were met in fiscal year 2000. The goal is to occupy both buildings within the next four years. The completion of these two facilities for ATF will provide radically improved efficiency of mission functions. The technology infrastructure capabilities for ATF's future will be upgraded; and the Bureau will be situated toward the forefront of investigative and regulatory support, law enforcement operations, and delivery of services to industry, State and local customers, and the public.



National Laboratory Center

The new ATF National Laboratory Center (NLC) on the Ammendale Business Park Campus in Northern Prince Georges County, Maryland, is being developed by the General Services Administration (GSA) for ATF. The NLC will provide new, modern space to conduct investigations and testing, more effective facilities technologies, and improved safety conditions meeting laboratory accreditation requirements. The NLC also has been designed to facilitate the investigation, research and data collection of fire and arson cases for ATF and the international fire science community. The development of the new NLC is crucial to the successful implementation of ATF's Strategic Plan, a portion of which addresses improved investigations in support of criminal enforcement in all ATF jurisdictional areas, including bombings and major fires.

The new NLC will house three different laboratories and continue as the administrative headquarters for the entire ATF Laboratory System. The Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) and Alcohol and Tobacco Laboratory (ATL) will be relocated from their current location in Rockville, Maryland. The third laboratory, the Fire Research Laboratory (FRL) will provide a new research capability for the Bureau. The new NLC was designed to meet the requirements of each laboratory's unique functions and critical demand.

The FSL's mission is to support crime scene investigations for ATF and State and local law enforcement agencies relating to firearms, bombings and major fires.

The ATL conducts chemical, physical and instrumental analyses on the alcohol and tobacco products that ATF regulates. This work supports the Bureau's regulatory enforcement activities to collect the revenue due the government and to protect the public in their consumption of these products.

The FRL will concentrate on forensic research and testing to support fire investigations. It will also support partnerships and the sharing of information among other fire science organizations around the globe. The new FRL will allow ATF scientists and engineers to recreate large fire scenarios under controlled and environmentally safe conditions. Where the handful of other fire laboratories in the world focus on consumer and industry safety, the ATF fire research program and facilities are being carefully designed to conduct the unique kind of forensic testing that will provide the tools

prosecutors and Certified Fire Investigators need to convict arsonists. The FRL will also serve as an international training and education center for the advancement of knowledge and technology transfer related to fire scene investigation.

As of the end of FY 2000, GSA has awarded a total of \$27.7 million in contracts towards the new ATF Lab project, or 38% of the entire appropriated project funds. The NLC is scheduled for a 24-month construction period and will be ready for occupancy in the summer of 2002.

ATF National Headquarters

During fiscal year 2000, the ATF Headquarters project also moved forward. Activities included the signing of an agreement with the Government of the District of Columbia (DC) and other invested parties to develop the new ATF HQ on parcel 710 of the New York Avenue Gateway Corridor; completion of the Environmental Impact Statement with associated public hearings; GSA Design Excellence solicitation for architect and engineering services, including a design competition;

GSA negotiated terms and conditions with the DC Government for land conveyance; updating of the original ATF space program; and obtaining full authorization for construction by the U. S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. The DC Government secured congressional appropriations and a private-sector tax assessment charter for a new Metrorail station adjacent to the proposed ATF site.

The new ATF National Headquarters will be the first Federal construction project to incorporate the full level of the GSA and Interagency Security Committee's security design criteria in an urban environment. The 1,100 ATF Headquarters employees will remain a vital part of the local community and broaden ATF's outreach and support efforts in education and prevention programs.

The ATF Headquarters project schedule remained steady during FY 2000. The building and development design will begin in January 2001, and the first construction activities will commence in late summer 2001, with completion and occupancy targeted for July 2004.