

ATF

News Release

Atlanta Field Division



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ATF NATIONAL RESPONSE TEAM ACTIVATED TO GEORGIA MILL FIRE

COLUMBUS, Ga. – The National Response Team (NRT) from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) along with ATF special agents from the Columbus Satellite Office and the Macon Field Office, of the Atlanta Field Division, have entered into the investigation of a large commercial fire at the request of the Columbus Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services. The fire occurred Thursday, Oct. 30, at the **Bibb Mill** located at 3715 First Ave., downtown Columbus. The NRT arrived today and will begin its work at the scene.

The 750,000 square foot structure was built around 1920 and holds significant historical value to the community. The approximate loss is estimated at \$2 million. The Mill housed several businesses and a portion of the property was to be converted to a condominium community. There are no reported injuries at this time and the investigation is continuing.

In 1978, ATF developed the NRT to provide resources to federal, state and local investigators in meeting the challenges faced at the scenes of significant arson and explosives incidents. The NRT consists of four teams organized geographically to cover the United States. Each team can respond within 24 hours to assist state and local law enforcement/fire service personnel in onsite investigations.

In addition to investigating hundreds of large fire scenes, the NRT has also been activated to scenes such as the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the Oklahoma City Federal Building bombing and the 9/11 Pentagon crash site, as well as explosions at explosives and ammunition manufacturing plants, legal fireworks factories and illegal explosive device manufacturing operations.

The teams are each composed of 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; intelligence support, computer forensic support and audit support. The teams work

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alongside state and local officers in reconstructing the scene, identifying the seat of the blast or origin of the fire, conducting interviews, and sifting through debris to obtain evidence related to the bombing/arson.

Further complementing the team's efforts are technical, legal and intelligence advisors. Moreover, a fleet of fully equipped response vehicles strategically located throughout the United States is available to provide logistical support.

This will be the NRT's second activation in fiscal year 2009 and the 660th activation since the inception of the NRT in 1978.

ATF is the federal agency with jurisdiction for investigating fires and crimes of arson. More information on ATF can be found at www.atf.gov.

Media Note: ATF and Columbus Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services officials will be available to the media starting tomorrow.

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