



News Release



Seattle Field Division

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ATF JOINS CHURCH ARSON INVESTIGATION

WASILLA, Alaska. – Acting Special Agent in Charge Douglas R. Dawson, Seattle Field Division, of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) today announced that agents from the Anchorage Field Office joined the Wasilla Bible Church arson investigation.

On Dec. 13, 2008, the Central Mat-Su Fire Department and the Alaska State Fire Marshals Office contacted ATF Anchorage Field Office and requested assistance in investigating the fire that occurred on Dec. 12. The on-site investigation revealed an ignitable accelerant that had been poured on and around the exterior of the church in multiple locations, to include the entrances and exits. Evidence recovered from the fire scene was collected and retained by members of the Alaska State Crime Laboratory. The initial damage to the structure is estimated at about \$500,000. No injuries have been reported.

Alaska Governor Sarah Palin has been known to attend this church in the past. Governor Palin and her family attended the church the Sunday before her selection as the Republican Vice-Presidential Candidate.

“ATF will continue to work diligently alongside our local partners and will make every effort to find the person or persons responsible for this fire,” said Dawson. “Most importantly, there were no injuries or deaths related to this incident.”

This is an ongoing, joint investigation with the Central Mat-Su Fire Department, the Anchorage Fire Department, the Wasilla Police Department and the State Fire Marshals Office.

More information on ATF and its programs can be found at www.atf.gov.

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