



Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Kansas City Division  
1300 Summit St.  
Kansas City, MO 64105

Special Agent in Charge Michael Kaste  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**August 6, 2012**

## **FIRE - ISLAMIC CENTER OF JOPLIN**

Joplin, MO – At approximately 3:40 a.m., August 6, 2012, the Carl Junction Fire Department and the Jasper County Sheriff's Department responded to a fire at the Islamic Center of Joplin after being notified of the fire by individuals passing the center. The center, located at 1302 South Black Cat Road, Joplin, Mo., sustained a total loss. The center was vacant at the time of the fire and no individuals sustained any injuries.

The FBI in conjunction with the ATF, the Jasper County Sheriff's Department and the Missouri Department of Fire Safety are currently investigating and providing significant resources to determine the cause of the fire. The ongoing scene investigation involves reconstructing the scene, identifying the cause and origin of the fire, conducting interviews and sifting through debris to obtain and collect evidence related to the incident.

FBI Special Agent in Charge Michael Kaste stated "We are currently in the preliminary stages of this investigation and are awaiting a determination as to the cause of this fire. If this fire is determined to be deliberate in nature it will be investigated to the fullest extent possible. Any act of violence to a house of worship is taken very seriously by law enforcement and threatens the very core of the safety and security that our communities enjoy."

"ATF will coordinate our efforts and provide our expertise and resources to determine the origin and cause of this fire," said ATF Acting Special Agent in Charge Jeff Fulton. "The impact of this devastating fire is not just a loss of a building but a spiritual loss to the community."

Jasper County Sheriff Archie Dunn stated "I extend my deepest condolences to the community during this difficult time. The Jasper County Sheriff's Office will continue to provide considerable resources until this investigation is completed."

Recently a \$15,000 reward was announced by the FBI and the ATF for information leading to the arrest and indictment of the person or persons responsible for the fire at this center on July 4, 2012. Surveillance video, a press release and an image of the suspect from the July 4<sup>th</sup> fire are available at <http://www.fbi.gov/kansascity>. The FBI, along with the other agencies involved will continue to investigate to determine if these two acts of violence are connected in any way.

This case is being investigated by the FBI, the ATF, the Jasper County Sheriff's Office and the Missouri Division of Fire Safety.

Law Enforcement is requesting the assistance of the public in this matter. Anyone with information regarding this fire is requested to contact any of the investigating agencies listed.

FBI Joplin Field Office: (417) 206-5700

Jasper County Sheriff's Office: Detective Tim Williams (417) 358-8177, ext. 1223

ATF: (417) 837-2100 or 1-888-ATF-FIRE

Missouri Division of Fire Safety Arson Hotline: 1-800-392-7766

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