

## **OPEN LETTER TO ALL FEDERAL FIREARMS LICENSEES**

When Attorney General John Ashcroft appointed me Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), I knew many challenges lay ahead for ATF and for America. It will be 3 years this September since America was attacked. We at ATF remain vigilant, but we are requesting your assistance in our national effort to prevent terrorism.

As you may also know, explosives are frequently used by terrorists to cause destruction. Some of the products you may carry in your inventory, such as black powder and smokeless powder, could be used in acts of violence. While smokeless powder and black powder generally are exempt from the Federal explosives laws, these products are often used to make illegal or “improvised explosives devices” and pipe bombs.

I encourage you to look at the information on the back of this letter and to incorporate these items into your daily business activities. Our hope is to make you aware as to how you can make the right call to report suspicious behavior and help protect America.

We are not asking you to be intrusive, simply aware. Because you interact daily with people during your routine course of business, you know who your customers are, and you are in the best position to recognize and report any unusual transactions. **BE AWARE FOR AMERICA!** America is our community, and we need to continue to do everything we can to make it safe.

You may have recently heard about or read news accounts of the increasing threats of terrorism in the coming months. Let us all work together to prevent terrorists from obtaining and using explosives or firearms.

Thank you for your continued vigilance!

Carl J. Truscott  
Director

## **BE AWARE FOR AMERICA.....**

All of us are concerned about the intentional, criminal misuse of explosives or firearms. We also believe we can play a role in preventing such abuse in the future. So, we're joining forces to help protect these products from falling into the hands of those with criminal intent. Here are a few steps you can take to help make the effort a success.

### **AWARENESS AND ACTION. OUR MOST EFFECTIVE BLEND.**

The first step to take is *protect your products*. Make your own place of business or residence a secure site for storage and distribution of explosive products and firearms. If you sell black powder a Federal license is required, but generally no record of distribution is required. Consider on a voluntary basis maintaining records of transactions including the individual's driver's license information. Smokeless powder generally requires no Federal license or permit, and there are no recordkeeping requirements. However, keep in mind smokeless powder is the explosives material most often used in pipe bombs and other explosive improvised devices. A few questions as to how the powder will be used may deter someone with ill-intent. Also, if you have a personal collection of firearms, or a personal use quantity of explosive materials secure these items in a safe manner. Maintain a record including serial numbers of all firearms you possess for purposes of reporting stolen firearms to law enforcement.

Now for step two – *know your customers*.

### **MAKE THE RIGHT CALL.**

Nobody knows your customers or other hobbyists and their needs like you do. You can use this knowledge to help protect against the criminal misuse of explosive materials including smokeless powder. In your conversations you may be able to tell if something's not quite right with someone's request to obtain explosives – be it the quantity they ask for; their lack of knowledge of the products; or their impatient, nervous, agitated manner.

If something doesn't seem quite right, wait until the person has left. Jot down as much information as possible. Then call the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) at the toll-free number indicated below. Don't doubt your instincts or second guess yourself. If something gives you pause, in even a small way, call the number. ATF and local law enforcement agencies will conduct a discreet investigation right away. Any information you give will remain confidential, including your name and address. Your swift action just might protect lives, property, and our individual freedom.

