

John A. Torres, special agent in charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the Orange County Sheriff's Department, today announced a \$25,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the theft of explosives.

Between September 2008 and Oct. 9, 2008, large quantities of explosives were stolen from a locked container on a remote hillside in Blackstar Canyon located adjacent to the Cleveland National Forest. The items taken consisted of the following:

- 150 pounds of blasting agent, believed to be Hercules Hercomite brand, stored in 5-50 pound cardboard boxes. Each box contained an unknown number of "sticks" (approximately 10" long x 1" in diameter), similar in appearance to a stick of Dynamite.
- Three boxes (25 caps per box) of number one electric blasting caps, possibly by Atlas. They either have yellow and orange wires or blue and white wires.

All these items have been stored in harsh conditions for many years. They are believed to be deteriorated and extremely unstable. Authorities request anyone with information on this incident immediately contact law enforcement and maintain at least a 300 foot perimeter.

"ATF and the Orange County Sheriff's Department have been working diligently following up on all leads and will do so until the case is solved," said Torres. "We are asking for the public's help in this case to help avoid a tragedy. We are offering a substantial amount of money for information, and we all know in this economic climate extra cash would certainly be put to good use," added Torres.

ATF and the Orange County Sheriff's Department have stated that for those involved in the incident, the condition of these explosives puts them and everyone in the vicinity at an incredible risk.

Anyone with information about this theft or the location of the explosives is urged to call ATF's toll-free, 24-hour hotline at 1-888-ATF-BOMB (1-888-283-2662) or the Orange County Sheriff's Department at (714) 628-7170. Callers can remain anonymous.