

State Fire Marshal, ATF Investigate: Multiple Agencies Battle Heavy Fire At Dow Southern Baptist Early Wednesday

by Chris Rhodes, Reporter
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DOW - Multiple fire agencies and the Illinois State Fire Marshal's Office responded to a destructive church fire at Dow Southern Baptist at 15910 Bartlett Road in Dow early Wednesday morning. The fire is under investigation by the state fire marshal's office and Alcohol, Tobacco Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Office because it is a church fire.

The call for the church fire came out around 2:30 a.m. Wednesday. Jersey County Sheriff Mike Ringhausen said there are a lot of "hearts hurting" here today because of the devastating fire, but he said it was a blessing no one was hurt. He said part of the church operation was saved by the heroic efforts of multiple fire agencies. He added that he knows the church will rebuild and come back from this traumatic situation.

Ringhausen said it will likely be some time before the State Fire Marshal's Office makes a ruling on the cause of the fire.

The sheriff said agencies who battled the fire were QEM Fire Protection District, led by Chief Gerry New, Godfrey Fire Protection District, Brighton, Carrollton, Jerseyville and Fieldon fire departments.

Two Rivers Crime Stoppers announced this morning a \$500 reward has been offered after the Jersey County Sheriff's Office requested any assistance from anyone with information leading to the cause or person/persons responsible for the destruction of the Dow Baptist Church and the ATT Building located in Dow. The Jersey Sheriff's Office phone number is (618) 498-6881.

Sheriff Ringhausen again emphasized that no official determination of how the fire started has been officially decided, so any input from the outside would be helpful in the investigation.



[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)