



Bill Newell, of the ATF's Phoenix field office, during a press conference, Wednesday afternoon. (Mark Wilson Photo)



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### [ATF opens office at RPD](#)

Thursday, February 25, 2010

A federal law enforcement officer announced the opening of a satellite station of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives in Roswell, Wednesday.

Two ATF agents, with the possibility of two more before the end of the year, have begun working out of the Roswell Police Department headquarters with local law enforcement personnel. The agents will focus primarily on locking up violent criminals and repeat offenders, said William Newell, special agent in charge of the ATF Phoenix Field Division.

"You don't mess with the police, you don't mess with the sheriff and you sure as hell don't mess with the ATF," he said. "Our primary focus ... (is to) remove the worst of the worst. This is your tax dollars at work."

Newell said the agents will work with local police in ongoing investigations centered on career criminals and send violent lawbreakers to federal prison.

"If you get one of these guys out of the community, it sends a message," said Chaves County Sheriff Rob Coon, who attended the news conference. "The guys we're really after — we want them gone."

The joining of the two agencies under one roof comes after five years of the ATF and RPD working together in a number of cases, said RPD Chief Rob Smith.

"This is going to take a good partnership and make it better," he said. "We have the personnel and the local knowledge, they have the resources."

In a written statement, Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M, said, "I strongly support this initiative and was pleased to help secure the \$10 million under the Recovery Act to hire new ATF agents and establish offices, such as this one in Roswell. It is important for rural communities to have the support of federal law enforcement authorities and I am very pleased that the ATF is expanding its presence in New Mexico."

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