



# Texas Department of Public Safety

## Information for the News Media

Media Relations Office

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## Two men arrested in East Texas church arsons

Photos available at:

[http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/director\\_staff/public\\_information/pr022110photos.htm](http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/director_staff/public_information/pr022110photos.htm)

Authorities have charged and arrested two men in connection with one of the 10 church arson fires that occurred in East Texas beginning on Jan. 1, 2010. Three other churches were targets of attempted break-ins, and investigators believe those and the remaining nine burned churches are also connected to these men. The investigations are ongoing.

The two men arrested are Jason Robert Bourque, 19, of Lindale and Daniel George McAllister, 21, of Ben Wheeler. They had attended the First Baptist Church in Ben Wheeler together. Bourque was arrested without incident in Van Zandt County and transported to Smith County and McAllister was arrested without incident by Texas Rangers in San Antonio and also transported to Smith County.

“By working closely with our local and federal partners, we brought tremendous resources to this investigation, working around the clock, and culminating in these arrests. The arsons of these houses of worship were despicable and cowardly acts, and Texas won’t stand for this kind of criminal activity,” said Steven C. McCraw, director of the Texas Department of Public Safety.

“Clearly this effort shows that Texas law enforcement has mastered the art and science of working together, sharing information, and dedicating the necessary resources to bring cases such as these to a successful resolution, and these officers are to be commended,” McCraw said.

The men were arrested by the task force created to find these individuals and stop these arsons. The task force includes hundreds of local law enforcement officers, more than 200 personnel from the DPS, including Texas Rangers, Highway Patrol troopers and Criminal Investigation Division agents, fixed-wing and helicopter aviation assets and the DPS Communications and Fusion Centers, and numerous Federal Bureau of Investigation and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) agents and specialists. A call to a task force tip line alerted investigators to the two men.

Agencies involved in the arrests included the DPS; FBI; ATF; Tyler Police Department, Henderson County Sheriff’s Office and Fire Department; Van Zandt County Sheriff’s Office and Fire Department; Wills Point Police Department; Smith County Sheriff’s Office, Fire Department and Fire Marshal’s Office; Athens Police Department; and the Canton Police Department.

Read about DPS online at [www.txdps.state.tx.us](http://www.txdps.state.tx.us)

The task force was formed on Jan. 20, and investigators worked cases in a three-county area covering 2,648 square miles and an estimated 713 churches. Investigators from numerous agencies worked together to develop leads, and local agencies assisted with nightly patrols of churches in the area to prevent additional arsons.

**Dates and locations of arsons:**

- 01-01-2010, 9:02 AM – Little Hope Baptist Church – Canton, TX;
- 01-01-2010, 11:05 AM – Faith Baptist Church – Athens, TX;
- 01-11-2010, 10:40 PM – Grace Community Church, Athens, TX;
- 01-12-2010, 12:09 AM – Lake Athens Baptist Church, Athens, TX;
- 01-16-2010, 6:30 PM – Tyland Baptist Church, Tyler, TX;
- 01-17-2010, 6:33 PM – First Church of Christ Scientist, Tyler, TX;
- 01-20-2010, 7:37 AM – Prairie Creek Fellowship, Lindale, TX;
- 02-04-2010, 5:23 AM – Russell Memorial United Methodist Church, Wills Point, TX;
- 02-08-2010, 8:47 PM – Dover Baptist Church, Tyler, TX;
- 02-08-2010, 9:44 PM – Clear Springs Missionary Baptist Church, Lindale, TX.

In addition to the arsons at the above listed churches, there were attempted break-ins at the following churches:

- 02-07-2010, 12:19 AM, Heritage Baptist Church, Tyler, TX;
- 02-08-2010, 9:19 PM, Clear View Baptist Church, Tyler, TX;
- 02-08-2010, 9:39 PM, Pine Brook Baptist Church, Tyler, TX.

### (PIO 2010-20)

Editors note: maps of the investigation area and the locations of the church arsons that were part of this investigation are available here:

[http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/director\\_staff/public\\_information/pr022110a.pdf](http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/director_staff/public_information/pr022110a.pdf)  
and [http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/director\\_staff/public\\_information/pr022110b.pdf](http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/director_staff/public_information/pr022110b.pdf)