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 DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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**CONTACT: Tom Womack**  
**(615) 837-5118 (office)**  
[Tom.Womack@State.TN.US](mailto:Tom.Womack@State.TN.US)
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 Media Contact, Tom Womack, PIO  
 Tenn. Dept. of Agriculture  
 Ellington Ag Center, Nashville, TN 37204  
 (615) 837-5118, Fax: (615) 837-5333  
[Tom.Womack@state.tn.us](mailto:Tom.Womack@state.tn.us)
**Ag Crime Officer Named Arson “Investigator of the Year”**

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** – State Agricultural Crime Unit officer Morris Rogers, a 14-year veteran of law enforcement, was recently recognized as the 2006 “Investigator of the Year” by the Tennessee Advisory Council on Arson (TACA). Rogers was honored by the arson prevention group in a special ceremony May 18 during their annual meeting in Murfreesboro.

“We have a team of dedicated law enforcement officers who are committed to protecting life and property in ways that may not be obvious to the average Tennessean,” said state Agriculture Commissioner Ken Givens. “Morris Rogers is a prime example of the caliber of investigator that we have in our Agricultural Crime Unit, and we’re proud that he has been chosen for this honor.”

Rogers was honored for his work last year in helping to solve numerous wildland arson cases in the southwest portion of Middle Tennessee. He was also instrumental in solving multiple radio tower burglaries that briefly shut down emergency communications for several state law enforcement and public service agencies in Perry County last July and August.

Rogers has been an investigator with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Crime Unit (ACU) since 2003. The ACU specializes in investigating criminal activity affecting rural areas such as wildland arson and livestock theft, and it supports the regulatory programs of the department involving chemicals, animal and plant health, and food safety.

Rogers received wildland arson training at the Federal Law Enforcement training center in Glynco, GA in 2006 and 2007. He is one of 11 investigators with the unit and serves in Decatur, Hardin, Hickman, Lawrence, Lewis, Maury, Perry and Wayne counties.

Prior to joining the Agriculture Department, he served as Chief of Police in New Johnsonville. He served with the Benton County Sheriff’s Department from 1993 to 2001 as a K-9 officer and Chief Criminal Investigator. He also served on the Drug Task Force in Benton County.

A native of Benton County, Rogers and his wife Penny have been married for 22 years and have two daughters who attend the University of Tennessee at Martin. They are members of Grace Baptist Church in Camden.

TACA is a professional organization of local, state and federal law enforcement officials along with private insurance investigators and firefighters dedicated to preventing and investigating wildland and structural arson in the state. The organization also sponsors

rewards of up to \$1,500 for information leading the arrest and conviction of arsonists through the state Fire Marshal's hotline at 1-800-762-3017.

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Department of Agriculture  
Ellington Agricultural Center  
Nashville, TN 37204  
615.837.5103