



Dec. 5, 2011  
DPS PR #11-075

### **Five People Injured in Cantwell Explosion**

(CANTWELL, Alaska) – Five people were injured in an explosion and fire at a gas station convenience store in Cantwell Sunday night. At approximately 6 p.m., the Alaska State Troopers dispatch center in Fairbanks received a report that an explosion occurred inside the Chevron gas station at mile 210.3 of the Parks Highway. The force of the explosion blew the windows out of the building and debris into the parking lot. Garbage cans and grocery baskets landed past the gas pump island in front of the store. The gas pumps did not burn in the fire that followed the explosion. The store, however, was fully engulfed in flames when troopers arrived on scene. Several people, including both employees and customers, were inside the store and in the parking lot when the explosion occurred. One store employee, Samuel Allan, 26, of Cantwell, made several return trips inside the burning store to ensure everyone made it out safely. Allan was eventually transported to Fairbanks Memorial Hospital (FMH) by an ambulance from Nenana Volunteer Fire Department. Another employee, Gale Andersen, 61, of Cantwell, suffered significant burns and was transported by ambulance to Providence Memorial Hospital in Anchorage for treatment. She was flown to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle today. Also injured in the incident were Judith Riley, 70 of North Pole; Mathew Atkinson, 43, of Fairbanks; and Allen Glore, 58, of Cantwell. Riley and Glore were transported to FMH. Glore was later flown to Providence in Anchorage for further treatment of his injuries. Atkinson received treatment from EMS on scene.

Tri-Valley Volunteer Fire Department, Cantwell Volunteer Fire Department, Denali National Park Service EMS, McKinley Village Fire Station, Nenana EMS and Talkeetna EMS responded to help fight the fire and transport patients. The volunteer fire departments in Anderson and Nenana were put on standby to cover other emergency calls along the Parks Highway. Workers from the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities responded to help troopers with crowd control, directing traffic and clearing vehicles from the parking lot. Three Alaska State Troopers and an Alaska Wildlife Trooper from the posts along the Parks Highway responded to help coordinate efforts to get the injured to medical facilities and to contain the fire to the convenience store as much as possible. A diesel tank that provides heat to the building also burned in the fire. The store continued burning throughout the night and was extinguished this morning.

Two Deputy Fire Marshals are on scene today to conduct an investigation into the cause of the fire. The Department of Environmental Conservation was notified.