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Bessemer DA Washington Presents ‘Rusty Hook Award’ To Sen. Rodger Smitherman and Rep. Allen Treadaway

*Award Was Given at First of DA’s Planned Quarterly Meetings
of City, County, State and Federal Law Enforcement Agencies in Cutoff*

BESSEMER, Ala. – Bessemer Cutoff District Attorney Lynneice O. Washington, on behalf of the Alabama District Attorneys Association, today presented state Sen. Rodger M. Smitherman and state Rep. Allen Treadaway the association’s Rusty Hook Award.

The award is given by the ADAA in recognition of the lawmakers’ efforts in the Alabama Legislature to promote judicial justice and support the work of district attorneys in serving their communities.

“It’s a way for Alabama DAs to say, ‘Thank you for hanging in there with us like a rusty fish hook,’ as the old saying goes,” Washington said. “It’s a real honor and pleasure to recognize two men who for years have worked to advance public safety and justice. The fact that one has a background in law and the other in law enforcement makes their selection so much more appropriate.”

Smitherman is a longtime Birmingham lawyer and serves on the Senate Judiciary Committee. Treadaway recently was appointed deputy chief of police for the Birmingham Police Department and chairs the House’s Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee.

The awards were presented during today’s Bessemer Cutoff Public Safety and Information meeting held at Lawson State Community College’s Bessemer Campus. Attendees included area police and sheriff’s officials, mayors and representatives of the U.S. Attorney’s Office, the FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the Jefferson County Commission, the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles, the DA’s office and the Alabama District Attorneys Association.

The meeting was the first of what District Attorney Washington plans as an ongoing quarterly get-together to discuss crime-fighting strategies, cooperation and information sharing among agencies, and training opportunities.

Washington noted that Smitherman, as well as his wife, Jefferson County Circuit Court Judge Carole Smitherman, taught her at Miles College Law School. “They were an awesome duo,” she said.

The district attorney praised Sen. Smitherman for helping pass legislation that provided important protections for Alabamians. These included expanding the list of places covered under the state’s terrorist threats law and increasing protections for victims of elder abuse.

“Because he is a lawyer, he is able to interpret how the various laws passed by the Legislature affect our communities,” Washington said.

She commended Treadaway, a longtime police officer, for helping pass legislation to strengthen law enforcement and protect law enforcement officers. One example cited was a bill that improved benefits for retired police officers.

Trisha Mellberg of the ADAA and the state's Office of Prosecution Services thanked Smitherman and Treadaway for working with the association on bills important to DAs. "Smitherman brings a different perspective in his role with the Judiciary Committee, and so does Treadaway on the Public Safety Committee," Mellberg said. "Their insight helps make bills better."

Washington said it was important to invite Bessemer Cutoff area mayors along with their police chiefs because the concerns of law enforcement overlap with the concerns of city leaders, especially when it comes to economic considerations. "No one wants to open a business in a city riddled with crime," she said. "And no one wants to start a business in a city where schools aren't good."

Several western Jefferson County mayors attended, as well as County Commission President Jimmie Stephens.

Washington emphasized that combating crime requires collaboration from federal, state, county and city agencies.

"We've got to help the police help us. We've got to help the Sheriff's Department help us. We've got to help the U.S. attorneys help us. We got to help the ATF, the FBI and all those people help us," she said. "So, we look forward to working together more."

"Historically, everybody has kind of done their own thing. But I think we can do better, we can be stronger together if we join forces and share information, utilize those resources that are out there that help combat crime and help maintain community trust."

Washington said the next meeting will be held in January at Lawson State.

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