

NEWS RELEASE

Luther Strange

Alabama Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AG HOLDS 13th ANNUAL LAW ENFORCEMENT SUMMIT

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Luther Strange today presented the 13th annual Attorney General’s Law Enforcement Summit, carrying on a tradition that was begun in 2000 by former Attorney General Bill Pryor. This year’s theme was “From the Crime Scene to the Courtroom, and Beyond.” More than 725 law enforcement officers from throughout Alabama registered to attend, receiving practical information and professional training with a primary focus on crime scene investigation as it relates to the final prosecution. The 2012 summit was held in Montgomery at Frazer United Methodist Church.

Attorney General Strange welcomed law enforcement officers and discussed the event’s theme. “Teamwork is critical to the success of law enforcement. Each level of an investigation must be carried out in a way to support the next step in the prosecution of a case. This year we want to get everyone on the same page---from the first responder, to the crime scene investigators, to the prosecutors in the courtroom. There are times when one misstep can cause a whole case to be thrown out. Justice demands that we each do our part to uphold the integrity of our investigations and prosecutions.”

This year’s conference featured a series of presentations from experts that included the following: Lectures on the State of Florida v. Casey Anthony, from Major Ron Stucker, Orange County Florida Sheriff’s Office; “Prosecution: Getting to the Courtroom,” from Barry Matson, Deputy Director, Office of Prosecution Services; “The Analysis of Forensic Evidence from the Crime Scene to the Courtroom – Firearms, Drugs, and DNA Testing in Alabama,” from Angelo Della Manna, Assistant Director of the Department of Forensic Sciences; and “Testimony and Legal Issues,” by Assistant Attorney General Andrew Arrington of the Attorney General’s Criminal Trials Division.

A panel discussion covering victim services was moderated by Patty DeBortoli, Director of Victims Services for the Attorney General’s Office; with discussion from Dr. Cassie Jones of the Alabama Crime Victims’ Compensation Commission; Trisha Mellberg of the Alabama Office of Prosecution Services; and Chris Newlin, Executive Director of the National Children’s Advocacy Center.

Attorney General Strange thanked those who provided valuable information in these presentations, and also his Law Enforcement Coordinator, Louis Zook, as well as Constituent Affairs Director Jeff Sommer, for their dedicated and outstanding work in

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organizing the summit. Zook came to the Attorney General's Office in December of 2011 after serving nearly 17 years as police chief of Sylacauga.

A somber highlight of the day came with the commemoration of fallen officers who lost their lives in the past year. The Attorney General honored these officers with the presentation of memorial flags and certificates in honor of the following:

Officer David Riddlesperger, 48, of Fultondale Police Department died on October 31, 2011, after being involved in a single-vehicle accident in the Fultondale area. He was ending his tour of duty on the night shift when his patrol car struck a building in a local parking lot. It is believed that he may have suffered a medical emergency prior to the accident. Officer Riddlesperger retired from the Birmingham Police Department in 2006 with 20 years of service, before joining the Fultondale Police Department. He is survived by his wife and two sons.

Officer Steven Green, 36, of the Mobile Police Department died on February 3, 2012, as a result of being stabbed to death by a prisoner outside of the Mobile County Metro Jail. The subject had been arrested by an off-duty police officer after attempting to rob a dollar store. After being processed at the police station, he was being transported to the county jail when he attacked and fatally stabbed Officer Green outside of the jail complex. The subject then stole the officer's service weapon and patrol car. Other officers pursued the suspect to a home off of Dauphin Island Parkway where he engaged them in a shootout, wounding one officer in the arm. The suspect suffered a fatal gunshot wound during the exchange of shots. Officer Green had served as a police officer for 20 months. He is survived by his wife, son, and two daughters.

Reserve Deputy Don Williams, 55, of the Dale County Sheriff's Office died on February 8, 2012, after being involved in a single-vehicle accident in Ozark. He had just completed serving civil papers when his patrol car left the roadway and struck several parked cars. It is believed that he may have suffered a medical emergency prior to the accident. Deputy Williams had served as a reserve deputy for 17 years. He is survived by his wife and six children.

Attorney General Strange thanked the officers in attendance today, and expressed appreciation to their fellow officers in communities throughout Alabama. "I am grateful for and proud of the bravery and unselfish dedication that law enforcement officers give to people of Alabama in their service to us each day," he said. "It is my hope that this conference has provided valuable instruction and shared information that you will take back to your communities and that it may be of assistance as you carry out your noble task of protecting the people of Alabama."

The Attorney General's Office also distributed updated copies of the Alabama Criminal Code to be given to law enforcement officers throughout Alabama. Those departments that did not have a representative at the summit may contact the Attorney General's Office to arrange receipt of Criminal Code books for their officers.