

Joseph H. Hogsett, the United States Attorney, was in Salem Friday to acknowledge the presentation of a U.S. Attorney Award to Washington County Sheriff Detective Todd Combs, joined by Sheriff Combs, Hogsett applauded the significant impact that federal-local collaboration has had in the Salem area. Conbs was recognized for his role in the investigation and prosecution of the Hermion Torres and Freddie Hoe Taylor drug and gun trafficking organizations, which were responsible for the distribution of large quantities of marijuana, cocaine and methamphetamine throughout Southern Indiana and Kentucky. The investigation ultimately revealed a network of gun straw purchases who obtained firearms through Torres in Indiana, which were later traded to the Mexico-based Gulf Cartel, an international criminal organization. Hogsett said that Combs, along with a number of other federal and state law enforcement partners, used a variety of investigative techniques to bring those behind the organization to justice. As a result of these prosecutions, the flow of drugs and guns into Indiana was halted.

“The work of detective Combs on this case is an example of law enforcement at its best,” Hogsett said. “This was a complicated case with many moving parts, but the selfless dedication and tireless work of our partners here in Washington County helped ensure the criminals won’t terrorize this area ever again.”

The United States Attorney Award was established in 2003 to recognize outstanding law enforcement work in Hoosier Communities as part of federal investigations and prosecutions. Just 20 total awards were given in 2013 and the Washington County Sheriff’s Department was one of only six law enforcement agencies to be recognized.