

Idaho Meth Project Coming to Bonners

Boundary News

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A large-scale prevention program aimed at significantly reducing first-time meth use through an aggressive statewide campaign is coming to Bonners Ferry.

Presentations of the widely-acclaimed Idaho Meth Project - an innovative program geared to educating Idaho's teenagers and middle schoolers before they start experimenting with the highly-addictive drug - will be given at both Bonners Ferry High and Middle schools March 26.

Sponsored by the Bonners Ferry Chamber of Commerce, the nonprofit project launched in January is on a statewide blitz promoting a series of graphic ads and films depicting the ravages of methamphetamine use. Designed to prevent meth use by raising awareness of the dangers of the easy-to-obtain drug, the program was first established two years ago in Montana where it is credited with a 45 percent decline in teen meth use in that state.

Sparked by the strong attendance the program generated when it was presented in Sandpoint, Chamber Secretary Anita Stockdale-Woods immediately contacted the Idaho Meth Project's executive director to see if it could be brought to Bonners Ferry.

"When I heard about it, I thought it would be a great opportunity for Boundary County," she said. "I know meth is a serious problem among school-age kids, and we have not had a real presentation up here focusing on the issue."

Students can purchase black bracelets embossed with the words "Not Even Once" for \$1 following the presentations. The programs will be given at BFHS from 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. and at 2 p.m. at the middle school.

A statewide survey examining the attitudes and behaviors Idaho teens have toward methamphetamine found that 45 percent of young adults report meth is readily available and 30 percent claim they have been offered the drug.

Earlier this year, Idaho Governor Butch Otter requested the state legislature to appropriate \$1 million in tobacco settlement money from the Millennium Fund to join private, corporate and public partners that support the Idaho Meth Project.

The program is modeled after the Montana Meth Project, which is credited with reducing adult meth use in the state by 70 percent, a 53 percent decline in meth-related crimes and a 50 percent drop in meth-related foster care admissions.

Similar programs have also been initiated in Illinois and Arizona.