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## **Idaho Meth Project sets launch of ad campaign targeting drug;** **Graphic billboards, television ads modeled after successful effort in Montana**

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*By: Brad W. Gary  
Lewiston Morning Tribune*

By placing rotten teeth and open sores where everyone can see them, an advertising campaign will launch next week with the hope of keeping methamphetamine away from Idaho's teens.

Although still trying to raise money, The Idaho Meth Project will unveil the first phase of grisly anti-meth ads on billboards and television screens statewide next week. Debbie Field, director of the Idaho Office of Drug Policy, brought that timetable of the advertising campaign to a luncheon of the Lewiston Rotary Club Wednesday at the Red Lion Hotel.

Modeled after a similar campaign in Montana, the ads will begin to saturate Idaho's media outlets Monday. For the past two years, ads in that state have aimed to depict horror stories of teens, shaking and with open sores, resorting to crime and violence after first using the drug.

One Montana billboard depicts the back of a teen marred by open blood marks and scratches. "Scabs, hallucinations, and body sores," the caption reads. "Then things really go downhill."

The ads are described as a slap in the face, said Tom Donahoe, a partner with the advertising firm helping to bring the ad campaign to Idaho. Donahoe also spoke at Wednesday's luncheon.

"They are in your face," Field said. But she said they have dramatically reduced Montana's trafficking and use of methamphetamine since commercials began airing in 2005.

Montana was ranked fifth in trafficking and use of the drug, she said, but has since dropped to 39th in the last two years. Idaho now holds the rank of fifth, she said.

Approximately 250 to 300 pounds of methamphetamine are brought into Idaho each month, Field said, noting she has met children as young as 9 who have abused the drug.

Idaho Meth project ads use the slogan "not even once," to dissuade youths between the ages of 12 and 17 from using the highly addictive drug, Field said.

Idaho students will give their own stories of meth use in the radio spots, Field said. She said the goal of the ads is to "unsell" teens on first-time use of the drug and raise awareness about its effects.

"It's purposely dramatic," Donahoe told the Tribune of the ad campaign, "because the kids today are bombarded by so much media and creativity and special effects, it takes something extraordinary to get their attention and they need a wake up call."

The Idaho Meth Project advertising campaign will begin next week, coinciding with Gov. C.L. (Butch) Otter's State of the State address. Television and radio ads will begin airing Monday throughout the state, Donahoe said, with the campaign beginning on billboards and in newspapers on Tuesday.

The Idaho Meth Project ad blitz was projected to start after organizers raised approximately \$2.7 million in funding, according to the Associated Press.

The first part of the campaign will operate on \$1.2 million in funding, Field said Wednesday. But she said donated money would be leveraged into about \$4 million of advertising time and space.