

Blakefest was a success



The Reptillians, a band from Pocatello, performed at Blakefeston Saturday. Photo by Jenny Wixom.

IDAHO FALLS - Any sort of benefit event is set up to raise money for a good cause is a good thing, but add music and local talent to the mix and you've got something really special.

Blakefest 2008 and Beyond began as an idea for a backyard barbecue. Saturday's event was much more than just a little party, however. Eleven bands, mostly local, but one from as far away as Oklahoma, performed to raise money for the Idaho Meth Project. Blake Shropshire, organizer of the event, said that Saturday's event raised close to \$3,000, and about 500 people attended. Due to the success of this first Blakefest, he plans on hosting more benefit concerts. Shropshire says that he is happy with the way the day turned out, and that he has received much positive feedback from people who attended.

"I think gained some new emotions. I had fathers out there with their sons and kids come up to me and say, 'Man, this is the coolest way I could introduce my kids going to a concert with this kind of music,'" Blake said. The show was open to all ages, and there was no alcohol served or permitted. Many parents attended with their children.

Idaho Meth Project volunteers were on hand at the event as well. Several former meth addicts got on the stage to warn concert goers of the dangers of the drug and tell their stories. Rebekah told the crowd about the time when she was shooting up and a needle broke off in her arm. She also spoke of an instance when her now ex husband prostituted her out so that he could get the drug.

"I have three kids that I don't have any more because of the fact that I'm a drug addict. The youngest one I have, he's ten now, and I used meth the whole time I was pregnant. That's how much of an addict I was, I didn't even think of my unborn child," Rebekah said. Needless to say, a few people teared up, including me.

Rhett spoke of going from a managerial position on a golf course to being a caddy because of his

addiction. "Methamphetamine for me was one of the most destructive thing I have ever had to encounter," Rhett said, "I went from corporate management to caddying on a golf course, that's the best I could handle."

Ken, the third and final speaker of the day, once pulled a gun on his own father when he was on meth. "Twice in my life I put a gun to somebody's head and pulled the trigger. The first time was my father and it misfired, the second time was my own head and it misfired. And that was the last action that I did on Sept. 15, 2002 that threw me into the rooms of recovery," Ken said.

Although all of the bands who performed on Saturday played metal, the sound varied quite a bit through out the day. Bands who performed were Dissolved in Blood, The Reptillians, Denots, Neckbrace, Terrorist, Poolside at the Flamingo, Hate Locker, Dimmencha, Sonic Devastation, Fortunate Son and Ixxion. Poolside at the Flamingo traveled from Oklahoma and Terrorist came from Nevada. All the other bands are from the Southeast Idaho area. "I think that was the most respectable crowd of people I've ever met in my entire life," Blake said. Many people who attended the concert came back to his house the next day to help him clean up his yard, where the event was held.

The next Blakefest benefit concert will be held on Aug. 30 at Tony's Billiards in Blackfoot. All the funds gathered at that show will also go toward the Idaho Meth Project. More details, including what bands will be performing, will be announced soon.

Blake would also like to add a thanks.

"I think the bands did a phenomenal job, they showed so much appreciation even though it was hot and they had a long day. Thanks to the people who showed up," Blake said.

*For video of the event, go to the multimedia section of the Idaho State Journal website.