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Simpson wins $1 million for Idaho Meth Project

- Statesman staff

The anti-methamphetamine program championed by Idaho First Lady Lori Otter is expected to receive another $1 million, thanks Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho.

Simpson, a member of the House Appropriations Committee, secured the money as part of a final year-end bill funding several federal departments and agencies. The Idaho Meth Project is known for graphic anti-meth advertising.

Simpson also announced another $1.75 million in federal funds for Interstate 84, the Idaho State Police, the Idaho Department of Corrections and children's health services.

“My wife, Kathy, and I have been so impressed by the Idaho Meth Project and the positive results it is achieving across the state,” said Simpson in a news release Thursday. “The governor, first lady and their staff deserve a tremendous amount of credit for establishing this program in Idaho and making it a top priority. The sad reality is that meth continues to rob too many Idahoans of their money, their futures, and their lives.”

Lori Otter said in the news release: “The governor and I launched the Idaho Meth Project in the belief that aggressively educating the next generation of Idahoans about the dangers of methamphetamine abuse can significantly change how this dangerous and addictive drug is perceived. In two short years we have seen undeniable evidence that the campaign is working and positively impacting the lives of many of our citizens. Young people along with hundreds of volunteers are reaching out to friends and family members, discouraging them from using this drug while spreading the 'Not Even Once’ message to every corner of our state."

The goal of the Idaho Meth Project is to reduce first-time methamphetamine use in Idaho. To projects focuses on public service messaging, public policy and community action.

The bill also contains $400,000 for the I-84 expansion project. This project will add third eastbound and westbound lanes to the freeway between Broadway Avenue and Gowen Road in Boise.

In addition, the bill contains $350,000 for children’s health services expansion at St. Luke’s Regional Medical Center. The project provides an increase in capacity for pediatric medical/surgical, pediatric intensive care, neonatal intensive care, pediatric oncology, and pediatric surgical suites and support areas. The expansion will cover a service area between Salt Lake City and Portland.

Other Idaho-based projects receiving funding in the bill include:

- $500,000 for Idaho State Police participation in the Criminal Information Sharing Alliance Network.

-$500,000 for the National Consortium of Offender Management Systems Sharing Software for the Idaho Department of Corrections.

The legislation is expected to be passed by the House and Senate over the next two weeks and then be sent to the president for his signature.