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Idaho Meth Project Launches Paint the State Contest

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Lieutenant Governor Brad Little joined community leaders, elected officials, the Idaho Meth Project, and hundreds of high school students in Meridian to launch Paint the State—a statewide public art contest that will leverage the creativity and passion of Idaho's young people to communicate the risks of methamphetamine use. Also at the event, Idaho Meth Project Executive Director Megan Ronk highlighted data from the 2009 Idaho Youth Risk Behavior Survey, collected by the Idaho State Department of Education, which shows that Meth use among teens dropped by 52% in the two years since the Idaho Meth Project launched.

"Thanks to the coordinated efforts of law enforcement, treatment providers, and prevention programs like the Idaho Meth Project, we have made amazing progress in Idaho's fight against Meth," said First Lady Lori Otter, Idaho Meth Project founding board member and chairman of its Advisory Council. "Students in Meridian and all over the state have played a very important role in our success to date. They have shared their opinions, and reached out to friends and family to spread the message on the dangers of Meth. Now, Paint the State will give all Idaho teens a unique opportunity to show us their creativity and have their voices heard. The Governor and I look forward to seeing the amazing projects we know they will create."

Idaho's Paint the State contest was inspired by the Montana Meth Project's Paint the State contest in 2006, which mobilized teens in what became the largest public art contest in history, with more than 660 original artworks created. Paint the State will extend the messages of the Idaho Meth Project's prevention campaign at a grassroots level, directly into communities. Idaho teens will use the "Meth: Not Even Once" logo, tagline, or other anti-Meth theme, a little inspiration, and a lot of imagination to create works of public art.

According to the 2009 Idaho Meth Use & Attitudes Survey, 87% of Idaho teens now disapprove of trying Meth even once or twice. That point of view, and the creativity of Idaho's teens, was showcased at the event with the screening of an award-winning public service announcement written and produced by Meridian Charter High School students Jacob Fullilove and Jonathan Vaughan. The 30-second spot was selected as the winner in a contest conducted by the Meridian Mayor's Anti-Drug Coalition in March 2010, and was shown as an example of how teens can utilize their skills and ingenuity to further the "Not Even Once" message.

"We wanted to create a commercial that would really grab our audience's attention to spread awareness about the dangers of meth," said Jake Fullilove. "We're very excited to be a part of today's event, and to have the chance to encourage teenagers to say 'Not Even Once' to meth abuse, especially in such a creative way. We hope our message motivates teens all over Idaho to Paint the State."

More than \$135,000 in prizes will be awarded through Paint the State, including \$5,000 for the statewide winner, and county prizes of \$1,500 for first place, \$1,000 for second place, \$500 for third place. All prizes are funded through private contributions from the Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation for Health, the Idaho Hospital Association, and Monsanto. The Honorary Chairmen for Paint the State are philanthropist Velma Morrison and business leader Winston Moore, with Marty Peterson of the University of Idaho serving as Event Chairman.

Paint the State 2010 is open to teens ages 13-18. Teens under 18 must have permission from their parent or guardian to participate. Information about the contest, including rules and tips, are available at www.PaintTheStateIdaho.org. Teens can enter individually, but are also encouraged to collaborate as a team. To be eligible, each entry must be an original work of art, be displayed publicly, and have a strong anti-Meth message. This

can include the "Meth: Not Even Once" logo, tagline or any other anti-Meth theme. The deadline for Paint the State registration is June 18, 2010, at 11:59 PM MDT and artwork submissions are due by July 11 at 11:59 PM MDT. All winners will be announced at an event with Governor and First Lady Otter at the Idaho State Capitol on Friday, August 6, 2010.

About the Idaho Meth Project

The Idaho Meth Project is a non-profit organization that implements a range of advertising and community action programs to reduce methamphetamine use in the state. Launched in January 2008, the Idaho Meth Project leverages a proven model that combines extensive research with a hard-hitting, integrated media campaign. The Idaho Meth Project is affiliated with the Meth Project, a national nonprofit organization headquartered in Palo Alto, California, aimed at significantly reducing first-time Meth use through public service messaging, public policy, and community outreach. For more information, visit www.idahomethproject.org.