



Anti-meth ads start today

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By: Matt Christensen

Jan. 7 – The Idaho Meth Project today begins broadcasting television ads in its much-anticipated anti-meth campaign, according to an e-mail from Ross Mason, a Boise-based regional director for the group. The campaign, targeted at viewers age 12 to 17, is based on a project credited for drastically reducing meth use in Montana. Organizers here hope similar ads will curb the number of Idaho teens who try meth for the first time.

Montana began its program of often graphic TV, newspaper, radio and billboard ads in 2005, when it ranked fifth nationally in meth abuse, according to the group's Web site, which cites a federal report. A year later, Montana ranked 39.

According to the report, the number of workers in Montana who tested positive for meth fell nearly 70 percent while the ads were running. In Idaho, those numbers fell 35 percent in the same period. Montana spent \$12 million on its campaign. Idaho plans to spend \$2.7 million.

The Idaho Meth Project had raised about \$1.4 million, mostly from private donations, as of November – enough to pay for the ads during the first quarter of 2008 and half of the second. The group has asked the Legislature to pay for most of the remainder: \$1 million from the state's approximately \$4 million tobacco settlement and tax fund.

Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter announced last January that the campaign would come to Idaho, where, he said, the drug is devastating the state's youth.

The Idaho ads will feature explicit images and stories of meth addiction gathered from research in Idaho that included interviews with teen meth addicts. Project organizers will gauge the success of the program with a survey late this year.

To see and hear the ads: <http://www.idahomethproject.org> .