

## **ID group begins airing graphic anti-meth ads**

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The Idaho Meth Project has started running television, radio, print and billboard ads across the state in an effort to discourage the use of methamphetamine by depicting the drug's unsavory effects in graphic detail.

The campaign, modeled after the Montana Meth Project, was launched in conjunction with Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter's State of the State address on Monday.

The ads are targeted at 12- to 17-year-olds and are filled with images of pale young faces riddled with sores, and graphic scenes of violence, car collisions and desperate teenage criminals.

Officials previously said the campaign would not start until about \$2.7 million was collected so the ads could run steadily without fear of being stopped due to lack of money.

But only about \$1.6 million in donations has been promised or provided so far, enough money for about six months worth of ads, said Idaho Meth Project Executive Director Megan Ronk.

But Ronk said the decision to begin the campaign was made because the state's meth problem is so pressing.

"We just really can't afford to wait any more," Ronk told The Associated Press. "These kids are making these decisions now."

After the project started in Montana, the state moved from fifth in the nation in meth trafficking to 39th in one year. Idaho is now ranked fifth.

Those involved in the campaign are working on a "baseline survey" to determine just how many teens are using meth now, Ronk said.

As many as 80 percent of the child foster home placements by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare are directly related to the abuse of methamphetamine and other drugs, she said, and more than half of all Idaho inmates attribute their incarceration to methamphetamine use.

Debbie Field, director of the Idaho Office of Drug Policy, said meth has a 95 percent addiction rate, and that taxpayers pay \$55 a day for each of the 3,331 male prisoners she said are in jail because of meth.

The Idaho Meth Project is a private, nonprofit organization operating under the auspices of the United Way of Treasure Valley.