

May 25, 2007

## Local anti-meth campaign attracts national attention

By Terry Dillman Of the News-Times

Meth labs are disappearing. Meth purity is dropping. Meth prices are rising.

Those messages emerged cleanly during Lincoln County Meth Summit III held May 19 at the Newport Performing Arts Center, where about 65 folks gathered for a first look at three made-for-TV, broadcast-quality "life or meth" public service announcements; the winning design from a "No Meth, Not Here" banner, poster, and sign project; and a "sneak preview" of next year's productions focused on underage drinking.

The Lincoln County Methamphetamine Initiative's campaign against the manufacture, distribution, and abuse of methamphetamine has yielded impressive results. In fact, Lincoln County has led the way in Oregon, which itself has assumed a leading role in the nationwide effort to stem the meth tide, which has produced impressive results. Law enforcement officials say average meth purity in Oregon dropped from 71 percent in 2005 to just above 40 percent during the first six months of 2006. Street prices have soared, and meth lab seizures have dwindled locally, statewide, and nationwide, which means those labs are disappearing as ingredients become scarce.

Assistant County Counsel Rob Bovett has played a pivotal role in the county's response to meth. Bovett, who guides the county's meth initiative, established in 2000 to "develop a full range of prevention, enforcement, and treatment services" in the county, said a government-led crackdown on the key ingredients used to cook up meth is working.

"It's happening because policymakers are making the right choices," he noted at the summit.

Vigilance is vital in making sure the meth tide continues to ebb. One key to maintaining such vigilance lies in getting the word out - an underlying concept of the county initiative through the Methamphetamine Awareness Project (MAP), which provides state-of-the-art, broadcast-quality



Siletz Valley School teacher Joe Scott holds an anti-meth sign created by students, from left, Danielle Clark, Steven Lindstrom, Kohdi Sherman, Kimberly Anderson, Nichole Fisher, Kayla Stokes, Darian Dorman, Chris Crawford. They and fellow student Kendra Mura created the "Helping Hands Stop Drugs" banner image as part of the "No Meth, Not Here" campaign. The image is an amalgam of three posters created by Dorman, Mura, and Stokes, who finished 1-2-3 in a poster contest. The image is featured on banners, posters, yard signs, brochures, and more as part of the Lincoln County Methamphetamine Awareness Project (MAP). (Photo by Terry Dillman)

computer and video production equipment, as well as consulting services, to support the student productions like those seen at Meth Summit III.

This year's 30-second television public service announcements and other projects written, produced, and directed by students at Eddyville Charter School, Siletz Valley School, and Lincoln City's Career Tech.

Teacher Mary Jane Munger led the effort by Career Tech students Mike Alvord, Ashley Anderson, Brian Butts, Jeff Evans, Leslie Fowler, Jordan Keck, Kelly Lagula, Falcia Mellin, Chance Propst, and William Ward. Bob Pearson guided Amber Brown, Nikki Brown, Marjorie Decampo, Gavin Harris, and Nick Schovenic at Eddyville Charter School. Siletz Valley School's Joe Scott mentored students Kimberly Anderson, Danielle Clark, Chris Crawford, Darian Dorman, Nichole Fisher, Steven Lindstrom, Kendra Mura, Kohdi Sherman, and Kayla Stokes through their TV production efforts. Those same students teamed up with coordinators DeAnna Pearl and Delina John to create the "No Meth, Not Here" poster project.

Through their thought-provoking messages that reach out to adults as well as the students' peers, Bovett said they proved they can help stem the meth tide with thought-provoking words and images. Those words and images have reached well beyond the boundaries of Lincoln County.

In 2005, students at Taft, Newport, Toledo, and Waldport high schools produced 12 television public service announcements and two documentaries. Five of those PSAs aired on Oregon TV stations, including one featured on ABC's "World News Tonight." Student productions have also gone to other states and Canada (to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police) as examples of what youths can accomplish and contribute to vital social issues from their unique perspectives.

"The eyes of the nation's leaders are on Oregon, in particular Lincoln County," said Richard Krikava from the office of U.S. Senator Gordon Smith (R-Ore.). "At the White House, the Department of Justice, and in the halls of Congress, they're impressed with what's going on here. We're all paying attention and crafting policy around what you're doing.

Alison Craig from the office of U.S. Rep. Darlene Hooley (D-Ore.) said Hooley wants to "take this program and expand it to a national level."

Meanwhile, Lincoln County's attention will turn to underage drinking. Liz Mulder, coordinator for Enforcement of Underage Drinking Laws (EUDL) said students at Taft 7-12 School and Newport, Toledo, and Waldport high schools are already working on their television productions.

Folks at Meth Summit III were given a sneak preview of some "unfinished work" as students take on another serious problem and its consequences as part of a "None Before 21" campaign takes shape.

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