

February 6, 2004

To: Government Reform committee's Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources
From: Barry Humble, Executive Director Drug and Alcohol Consortium of Allen County
Re: "Fighting Metamphetamine in the Heartland: How Can the Federal Government Assist State and Local Efforts?"

I am grateful to Congressman Souder and the Committee for this opportunity to share my experiences and recommendations of dealing with "Meth" in northeast Indiana. My level of understanding concerning metamphetamine took a serious spike when I began my duties as Executive Director of Drug-Free Noble County in 1999. My previous experiences as a substance abuse educator in a rural public school and then as a community consultant for the Governor's Commission Drug-Free Indiana had created an awareness of the negative impact of alcohol and other drugs. However, the devastation caused by not only the use of metamphetamine but also in the "cooking" process as well as disposal of its toxic waste is incredible. In my professional life I have not encountered a substance that is so quickly addicts, is so readily available and is so difficult to treat.

My responsibilities as the former Executive Director of Drug-Free Noble County and currently of the Drug and Alcohol Consortium of Allen County emphasize the roles of **Prevention-Treatment-Justice**. It is within that framework that I share a concept developed within the state of Kansas and is being pursued within the 15 northeast counties of Indiana. The following counties each have a community anti-drug coalition and participate in a confederation know as the "Northeast Regional Advisory Board:" Adams, Allen, Blackford, Dekalb, Grant, Huntington, Jay, Kosciusko, LaGrange, Miami, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, Wells and Whitley. I am currently the chairperson and we receive guidance from Kelly Wilson of the Governor's Commission Drug-Free Indiana and her three staff persons. During 2003 there were 134 "Meth Labs" found in these counties according to the Indiana State Police. Deaths, property loss from fires and environmental contamination have resulted from these labs. The Northeast Regional Advisory Board was looking for a means that a community could effectively address this issues and discovered a program called "Kansas Meth Watch./ The key fixture of this program includes employee and management training of stores that sell "pre-cursor products involved in the manufacturing of meth. With some modified and additional pieces, we would like to replicate this program to be called "Northwest Indiana Meth Watch." Our program has three features:

1. Community Awareness; A power-point presentation will be developed by the former information officer for the Kendaville Police Department, Mick Newton in cooperation with the Indiana State Police to be used by each community coalition with service organizations, fraternal groups, churches and whoever else that can get in front of within their county. This will be supplemented by pamphlets, billboards and media coverage.

2. Employee and Management Training: Information will be provided to retailers that sell legitimate products that are “pre-cursors” to the manufacturers of meth. Many of these products are sold at convenience stores that historically have a high turnover of employees. Information that can be a part of a new employee training as well as on going training will be made available to assist retail employees with protocol when a suspected sale of pre-cursor products occur. In addition, signage will be available to retailer identify their stove as a member of “Northeast Indiana Meth Watch.” In addition we would like to partner with agri-business agencies to distribute “Tamper Tags” for anhydrous tanks. Currently, anhydrous is being taken from these tanks to be used in the cooking process creating a very hazardous situation. Farmers can spend \$150 to gas a tank lock but that has only resulted in a broken lock. A “Tamper Tag” costs about 20 Cents and will let the farmer know his tank has been tampered with preventing a dangerous accident.
3. The reasons for the is cooperative are many. First, the manufacture and distribution of meth is not limited by county lines. Because of the high quality of investigative work and previous awareness by law enforcement agencies, “Cooker” are purchasing pre-cursor products in one or more counties and conducting the manufacturing process in still another county. While Allen County has had one lab in 2003. Police agencies acknowledge the amount of “meth” on the streets of Fort Wayne is increasing. Secondly, a unified message for the region led by community in each county will create an effective and credible effort. This allows for diversity of delivery concerning a common theme. The intent is not hinder the sale of products used in a lawful manner, but rather create an awareness that the unlawful use of these products to manufacture and distribute metamphetamine will not be tolerated in Northeast Indiana.

The effectiveness of the program requires a great deal of cooperation, the Northeast Regional Advisory Board intends to bring together its resources to make this endeavor possible. In terms of what assistance the federal government can provide, I have these requests

1. Financial assistance with the development and production of videos to be used for employee/management training. Information concerns identification and protocol put in a convenient (tape-DVD) would be of great assistance to retailers.
2. Media campaign materials is newspaper slicks- billboard and radio/TV spots made available either production costs.
3. This may be the most important. We already have a significant number of people addicted to “meth.” Treatment providers indicate it is difficult at best. Research and effective treatment moderate need to be developed. In the Northeast Region we might be able to come up with the means to cover the first two requests, but we are really struggling to the answer the third.

Thank you for you concern about “meth” in the “Heartland” and we appreciate this opportunity to share our thoughts. We covet your assistance.