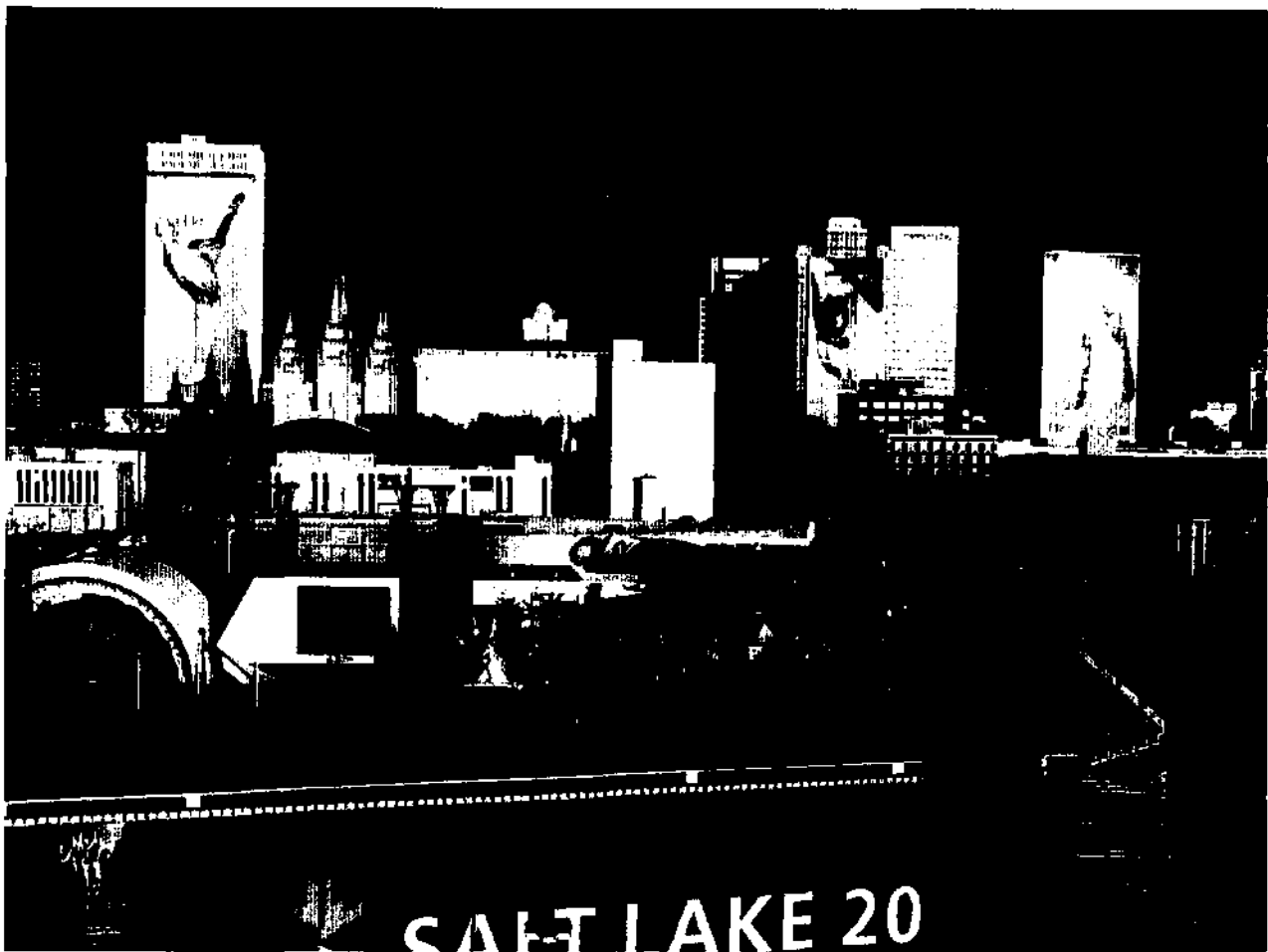


Salt Lake City Police Department



Methamphetamine Initiative



SALT LAKE CITY CORPORATION
POLICE DEPARTMENT



CHARLES F. "RICK" DINSE
CHIEF OF POLICE

ROSS C. "ROCKY" ANDERSON
MAYOR

April 14, 2003

Professor Ron Clarke
2003 Goldstein Award Selection Committee
PERF
1120 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 930
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Professor Clarke:

It is my pleasure to nominate The Salt Lake City COPS Methamphetamine Initiative for the 2003 Herman Goldstein Award. Salt Lake City Police Department has had a long history of Community Oriented Policing practices. The Salt Lake City COPS Methamphetamine Initiative has been extremely successive utilizing problem-oriented policing to engage the community with the Salt Lake City Police Department in making a significant shift in the illegal clandestine lab problem.

I attest to the Salt Lake City COPS methodology, and verify that the results of the project are both accurate and attributable to the project.

Sincerely,

Charles F. "Rick" Dinse
Chief of Police
Salt Lake City Police Department

METHAMPHETAMINE INITIATIVE SALT LAKE CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Problem:

An increase in methamphetamine clandestine drug laboratories in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Analysis:

Through the needs assessment SLCPD found that clandestine labs increased from 19 to 130 from 1990 through 1997. Projections based on the rate of increasing investigations for the first five months of 1998 showed a 41% increase in labs from 130 in 1997 to 220 in 1998. Salt Lake City itself had 20 labs in 1995, 22 in 1997, and in the first six months of 1998 had additional 26 labs. We also found that drug treatment admissions for methamphetamine had increased by 25% from 1990 to 1997. Comparisons of drug seizures also demonstrated the increasing presence of methamphetamine in this market. We noted that all neighborhood areas in Salt Lake City had lab activity and that the labs were small labs producing user quantity of methamphetamine.

Response:

In an effort to create a viable program to combat this popular drug, the Salt Lake City Police Department proposed a collaborative effort that is now known as the Salt Lake City COPS Methamphetamine Initiative. The Initiative was established in January 1998, administered by the Salt Lake City Police Department with funding provided through the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) as one of the six original Methamphetamine Initiative grants and the Office and the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

SLCPD created a cooperative partnership with over 30 public and private agencies to address the problems surrounding **meth** and other dangerous drugs. The result has been an enhancement in the way Salt Lake City addresses this issue. In addition to the traditional law enforcement investigative component to narcotics trafficking, the initiative addresses other components including child endangerment, neighborhood health and safety, prevention, drug court programs, and substance abuse treatment.

Assessment:

Salt Lake City Methamphetamine Initiative was evaluated by both local and federal evaluators. These evaluations provided valuable information to the agencies participating in the **project**. Through these efforts we have witnessed a decrease of approximately 50% in labs in Salt Lake City and Utah from 1999 through 2002. In Salt Lake City, fewer children are found in drug homes and those found now receive follow-up care. Properties that were used in the manufacturing of methamphetamine are now being rehabilitated. The community has become an active part of resolving illegal activity in their neighborhoods by increasing reporting.

SCANNING:

The spread of methamphetamine from the Western United States across the nation caused an increase in manufacturing, distribution and sales in Utah. With the increase in methamphetamine labs, treatment admissions and criminal drug activity; first responders attempted to catch up with the methamphetamine epidemic facing our community. Police, fire, medical, environmental and child protection were asked to respond to numerous situations resulting from methamphetamine activity in neighborhoods. These situations involved both injuries and deaths resulting from chemicals used to produce methamphetamine.

Children were being placed with neighbors or family members with out medical attention. There was no standard for chemically contaminated properties. Clandestine Lab cases were not being filed timely. Suspects had easy access to manufacturing chemicals and equipment. Illegal drug activity eluded citizens and agency professionals.

ANALYSIS:

Thirty agencies combined with the Salt Lake City Police Department to conduct a needs assessment of the problem. Analytical tools utilized included collecting data about drug arrests, seizures, treatment, and the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Program, as well as crime mapping, and multiple interviews with government agencies that were impacted by the problem. (See Map 1, Methamphetamine Labs Discovered in Salt Lake City)

Methamphetamine manufacturing activities were identified in the early 1990's and we found ourselves in an epidemic during the mid 1990's. A growing number of women in their child bearing years identified methamphetamine as their primary drug of choice. Many of the suspects, often referred to as "cooks", were Caucasian males. The number of victims multiplied as the results of this epidemic cost the community safety, health, financial stability and security.

Media coverage documented young children who obtained burns from the chemicals used to manufacture methamphetamine. They also told stories of teenagers who participated in their parents clandestine lab activities who also received burns sometimes resulting in death. Other headlines included families that experienced medical problems due to living in chemically contaminated housing.

Agencies were responding separately to the problem. First responders were obtaining unnecessary exposure or were reluctant to respond at all due to the caustic environment. There were few precursor laws in the state of Utah. Parents were being charged with a misdemeanor when their children were harmed as a result of their illegal drug activity. Suspects had multiple charges for manufacturing before they were seen in court on their first arrest. Neighborhoods were requesting assistance from the police department to provide training, added response and guidance on what to report.

SLCPD also conducted multiple interviews with government agencies that had a stake in the problem. Many of these agencies had an established working relationship however, SLCPD also included nontraditional partners.

RESPONSE:

Salt Lake City Police Department developed a comprehensive system-wide approach utilizing strategies that targeted drug demand reduction, meth production and distribution sites, enhanced prosecution, recovery/abatement of meth sites, training, enhanced public awareness and the associated issues of child **endangerment** and adult protective services related to meth sites.

The Salt Lake City COPS **Methamphetamine** Initiative brought together more than 30 partners including representatives from local and federal law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, social services, prosecutors, medical professionals, treatment specialists, local schools, environmental health, and other organizations.

The Initiative focused on specific areas including enforcement, public awareness, substance abuse treatment, prosecution, public health, and child endangerment. Meeting monthly the partners developed strategies in each of these areas, implemented the plan, and tracked the progress. Among the thirty partnering agencies the most significant achievement reported by the participating partners is the collaboration of multiple government agencies. The COPS Salt Lake City Methamphetamine Initiative incorporated innovative ideas and produced process change.

Enforcement

SLCPD Meth Initiative law enforcement agencies continually developed enhanced investigative techniques that assist narcotic officers in handling methamphetamine use, distribution and manufacturing. Illicit drug producers and distributors are dynamic, resourceful, well funded and are constantly changing. The law enforcement subcommittee found that it was imperative to anticipate, diagnose and respond to these trends in order to affect enforcement and intervention.

One strategy the SLCPD Meth Initiative included was a drug hotline where a large number of community complaints are received by two retired officers and a civilian employee. From those complaints an intelligence report is generated including the information from the complainant, verified information, an assessment of the threat and a set priority.

A large number of these complaints are cleared through Knock and Talks. "Knock and talks" are personal, doorstep conversations between a detective and a potential suspect. They occur when an initial investigation has not determined the need for a lengthy investigation, or where suspicion remains that there is illegal conduct, but no probable cause exists for a warrant. The suspect is advised of the concern about their conduct; a request is made to search the premise. The drug hotline combined with Knock and Talks

have had a positive impact on the community. Concerned citizens report a concern, see a response from a complaint within a two week period, and often receive immediate relief from the problem behavior.

The SLCPD Methamphetamine Initiative also focused heavily on training. The Narcotics Unit that handled clandestine lab scenes received significant training and became a certified clandestine lab team. With additional training and an additional certified team, resources in the area doubled, unexpected exposure decreased and community complaints were handled rapidly.

Cross training for law enforcement personnel and other partners gave participants **multidisciplinary** perspectives on the problem. This proved to be extremely helpful as it assisted the partnering agencies to become more effective in working as a team on cases, legislation and other community projects. Through these training efforts the COPS Meth Initiative partners received pertinent training which include family drug court training, drug endangered children training, specialty investigative trainings, and data base training.

The SLCPD also made a concerted effort to involve and educate the community. The collaborative training effort, included trainers from various fields, initiated through the partnering agencies to local, county and state government agencies, commercial businesses, neighborhood watch, public schools, landlords, utilities, social service agencies, hospitals, etc. Over **fifteen** classes are available and adapted for a variety of audiences.

Involvement of the community began in the planning stages of the project and has been a major effort of the COPS Meth Initiative. Efforts include working with neighborhoods to resolve drug problems as well as working with government agencies and community leaders to provide a joint coordinated response.

Representatives from key agencies are co-located with the Salt Lake City Narcotics Unit and respond as a team. The Meth Team, consisting of professionals from key agencies, is co-located with the Narcotics Squad to address four issues related to narcotics: immediate/proper response to drug endangered children, rehabilitation and the reuniting of families, community **health/safety**, and public awareness/education. Joint decisions made by the "team" strengthen cases and bridges the gap between agencies. Further, the entire team meets regularly to set goals, problem solve and develop needed legislation.

The Meth Team has added an important element to this strategy by providing accessibility to resources at the scene and during the investigation that were previously dispersed throughout the independent agencies. By adding a District Attorney, Paralegal, Child Protective Services Worker and Environmental Health Specialist that are immediately available, the Team becomes a more effective and comprehensive element in providing resources to those in need.

The Meth Initiative brought together agencies that traditionally had difficulty working together. As these agencies work on the many faceted issues of meth addiction they have developed positive working relationships and a joint community response to the **methamphetamine** problem as well as other community issues. Through the cooperation from valley wide agencies we are able to utilize additional resources that have yielded more positive long-term effects.

One of the key components of the Meth Team is the Intelligence Office. The Data and Intelligence Analysts provide the needed technical and computer expertise to effectively combat today's drug distribution and manufacturing networks. This support results in greater hours spent in the field by detectives and a more thorough and complete investigation including research, link charts, financial records, toll information and data analysis.

Another area the SLC law enforcement subcommittee has focused on is seeking greater penalties for meth manufactures. One of their major success in clandestine lab investigation is through tracking the regulated sales of crystallized iodine. **Through** the Iodine Database, law enforcement is able to track who is involved in the manufacturing process. Those individuals who are supplying precursors to be used in the production of meth are subject to additional charges for each time they purchase iodine. These enforcement techniques work hand in hand with the enhanced precursor laws established in the state of Utah. (See attachment 1, Hensley Case)

Ion Scan equipment has been obtained to assist in gathering evidence for child **endangerment** cases and obtaining probable cause for search warrants. Child **endangerment** cases allow for greater penalties in the State of Utah as these crimes are victim crimes reaching a higher level of community threat.

Intervention

One of the major successes of this collaboration is Salt Lake's Drug Endangered Children (DEC) program, which was developed to address the growing epidemic of children who are exposed to dangerous drugs and chemicals. The DEC program combines the resources of law enforcement, prosecution, child protection, environmental health, and medical personnel to provide a joint response in drug cases involving children. Through this collaboration the initiative streamlined joint agency protocols when responding to scenes with drug exposed children. Salt Lake City's DEC program was developed as a pilot project for the state of Utah. DEC projects have also been developed in West Valley City, Davis County and Ogden, Utah.

As local law enforcement agencies conduct warrant service on suspect drug homes one of the concerns they address are the children found living in clandestine labs and high use drug homes. Children who are exposed to drugs are often subject to physical and emotional neglect and live in filthy conditions. The Meth Initiative has tracked the number of children who are discovered in a clandestine lab sites and high use drug homes over the past three years. In the first two years of the project, the number of children

discovered and removed increased. In 2001 these two areas dropped significantly. However, the number of times Child Protective Services (CPS) responded to a narcotics scene where children were located continued to increase during the three years of the project.

Through a partnership with Primary Children's Medical Center (PCMC), they developed Utah's medical protocol for children with possible drug or chemical exposure. This protocol focuses on children's health and functions alongside other agencies protocols involved in the initial response to drug exposed children i.e. law enforcement and child protection. PCMC Emergency Department and Safe and Healthy Families Unit also collect hair, urine and blood samples.

The drug analysis on these samples indicates that these children are testing positive for multiple drugs in varying combinations including methamphetamine, amphetamine, THC, cocaine, opiates, benzodiazapines, and **benzoylecgonine**. Children who are exposed often exhibit symptoms or suffer from **oral/GI acid burns; agitation/irritability; fever; dehydration; nutritional challenges and general neglect**. They are also at greater risk for suffering physical and sexual abuse.

At this time, it is unknown what the long-term effects are to children who are exposed to **meth**. Gathering preliminary findings is a first step in a larger effort to gather base line information for a study of the longitudinal effects of children exposed to methamphetamine. The National Institute on Drug Addictions (**NIDA**) is working with Utah medical experts to conduct a descriptive study of the identified children exposed to methamphetamine and other dangerous drugs.

Through the prosecution subcommittee, members of the initiative wrote and helped pass the **Endangerment** of a Child or Elder Adult Statute in 2000. In the 2002 Legislative Session the statute was amended to allow for easier prosecution under the law. In the state of Utah drug crimes are now seen as victim crimes when children and elderly are present. The District Attorney's Office has provided training on the new statute to law enforcement and prosecutors state wide.

By enlisting the help of the Guardian Ad Litem's Office of the Third District Court, we have been able to better coordinate between the services provided by the District Court in child endangerment cases and the Juvenile Court in dependency proceedings. Doing this helps to ensure that the child victims in the criminal prosecution are not placed at further risk of abuse when the parents are undergoing court ordered drug treatment.

The Salt Lake Valley Health Department adopted a new regulation to improve decontamination of properties contaminated by illegal drug production. These regulations have been implemented and new procedures for investigating meth labs have been adopted and refined. Additionally, state legislation has been introduced to mandate timely **decontamination/rehabilitation** of property.

Prevention

The Public Awareness Campaign consists of Public Service Announcement's (PSA's), Billboards, Direct Neighborhood Contacts, Educational Videos, Pamphlets, and a collaborative training effort initiated through the partnering agencies to public schools, landlords, utilities, social service agencies, hospitals, etc. The objective is to educate the public to the health dangers that exist because of **meth** labs in their neighborhoods.

Through education and the Public Awareness Campaign, citizens become knowledgeable as to the indicators of clandestine labs in their community. Additionally, they understand the impact clan labs have on the neighborhood, both financially and in terms of neighborhood safety. The indicators of **methamphetamine** production continue to elude citizens and landlords due to their lack of awareness. Education and community involvement has been considered a key component to implementing the long-term solution.

Although the initial grant did not specifically contract with treatment services, treatment has been a continued focus of the partners. Influential treatment professionals have participated in the planning process and strategies of the project. Some of their accomplishments include pregnant women becoming a priority for treatment, treatment becoming an active partner in drug court programs and the development of the women with children treatment program.

The Cottonwood Family Center is an addition to the variety of treatment services offered in Salt Lake County. The Treatment Subcommittee examined the number of children being exposed to drugs in utero. They found that 80% of the children born exposed to drugs were placed in states custody and that within a 6 month period 50% of these children were being returned to mom. The problems they recognized included mother's using while pregnant, the increase of methamphetamine use among women, safety issues for the baby, and bonding issues between the infant and caretaker. Their response to this was the development of a treatment center that focused on pregnant women and children.

The Meth Initiative also integrated the Drug Court programs in Utah's Third District Court into the program to address the problems of drug addiction in adult and juvenile criminal cases as well as in cases where children have been removed from their parent's custody by social services. These programs utilize the assets of a variety of different agencies such as the courts, law enforcement, and treatment to combat the far-reaching effects of addiction. Drug Courts have a high success rate, which has decreased the number of incarcerations and assisted individuals in maintaining sobriety.

ASSESSMENT:

Salt Lake City Methamphetamine Initiative had local and federal evaluations beginning at the initial stages of the projects implementation through the funding period. These reports evaluated our process and provided ongoing input to the agencies involved in the project. (For the complete local evaluation, see Salt Lake City Methamphetamine

Initiative Evaluation Report was conducted by **Intermountain** Evaluation Services prepared by R. Steven Harrison, Ph.D., Bruce V. Parsons, Ph.D., and Stacy Eddings, M.S..) (For the complete federal evaluation, see COPS **Methamphetamine** Initiative Evaluation of Salt Lake City was conducted by the Institute for Law and Justice prepared by J. Thomas McEwen, Ph.D., and Stacy L. Osnick, M.A..)

Reduction in fear of crime was accomplished by additional awareness in the community as a result of training and the public awareness campaign. The community became actively involved in solving the problem through their participation in community-organized activities including the drug hotline. Commercial stores also participate by changing availability of products used to manufacture methamphetamine as well as reporting suspect behavior.

Additional awareness was measured through tracking training segments, number of public service announcements, billboards, videos produced, media activities and other efforts throughout the project. The Salt Lake COPS Meth Initiative provided 334 classes to **17,106** participants from March 1999 through March 2003.

Tracking the communities increased involvement was provided through the drug hotline. Since implementation of the Intelligence Office hotline response time has decreased by over 400% even with a volume increase of over **150%** more calls processed. The effect of these changes has been a more positive attitude towards law enforcement and a greater involvement and ownership by the residents in their own communities. (See Table 1 & Graph 1, Community Complaints)

The study examining Salt Lake City resident's perceptions of the quality of life in the city showed an increase by 6% of people feeling safe in their neighborhood during daytime hours and a 14% increase after dark. There was also an increase by 7% of feeling safe in the downtown area during the day and a 22% increase after dark. (For additional information on Salt Lake City Residents, see Dan Jones & Associates on behalf of Salt Lake City, 2001)

Another goal was to improve the communities trust in police. With the implementation of the Intelligence Office the community was able to share information with narcotics officers and receive a quicker resolution. Training segments provided by narcotic officers to public groups is seen as an effective tool in increasing the positive perceptions and addressing community concerns.

The reduction of crime was the greatest priority. Salt Lake City and the state of Utah as a whole has witnessed a decrease in the number of methamphetamine labs found. Drug Enforcement Administration tracks clandestine laboratory seizures in the state of Utah. In **1999** Utah found 242 Clandestine Drug Labs, in 2002 the number decreased to **110**. Salt Lake City in 1999 found 54 clandestine labs, this number decreased to 28 in 2002. (See Table 2, Graph 1 & 2, Lab Seizures)

Although the number of labs in Salt Lake County has decreased, the number of lab cases that have been successfully prosecuted has actually risen slightly because of better investigation and a closer working relationship with law enforcement. (See Graph 4, Lab Cases Filed)

Through our Drug Endangered Children program we have tracked a reduction in the number of children discovered at narcotic scenes and an increase in response to these victims. The Drug Endangered Children program began in Salt Lake City in February 1999. Children found at a narcotics scene increased by one-third from 1999 to 2000. However, comparing data from 2000 to 2001 the number of children located at these scene decreased by one-half. However, there was still a steady increase of child protection services responding to the law enforcement scenes. (See Graph 5, Children Found in Meth Labs and Drug Homes)

Along with the information collected on these children is hair analysis data collected by PCMC. The first year (2000) of the utilizing medical protocols for children who were believed to have exposure to chemicals or drug at a meth lab or high use drug home 40% were testing positive for narcotics metabolized in their system. In 2002 54% of the children tested positive. (See Table 3, Hair Analysis)

The increase in penalties for parents exposing children or elderly to illegal drug activities has deterred criminal activity. (See Table 4, Child Endangerment Cases Filed)

The project also wanted to improve the overall environmental conditions for Salt Lake City Residents. Salt Lake Valley Health Department established county regulations in August 2001 for the clean-up of chemically contaminated properties to address the environmental health issues resulting from the manufacturing of methamphetamine. With the new regulations in place residences are closed to occupancy until decontaminated. (See Graph 6, Meth Labs Reported to SLVHD) (For the complete regulation, see Salt Lake Valley Health Department Health Regulation 32, Chemically Contaminated Properties, 2001)

Overall we wanted to improve **our** community. One of the areas we noted progress is that more women with methamphetamine addiction are seeking treatment. Utah State Division of Substance Abuse fiscal year 2001 data illustrates Utah's methamphetamine problem. Perhaps the most significant statistic is that in FY 2001, methamphetamine out placed marijuana as the primary illicit drug of choice for patients in treatment. Of these 37% are female, most falling within childbearing years. (For additional information on treatment admissions for the state of Utah, see Utah State Division of Substance Abuse Fiscal Year 2001 for additional information on treatment admissions for the state of Utah)

Salt Lake City is a site for the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Program. This is data collected quarterly from the arrested population on drug abuse. 2002 data from this study ranked SLC females 4th and males 10th highest in the nation, respectively, for arrestees testing positive for methamphetamine. (For additional information on drug arrest data,

see Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Program for additional information on Salt Lake County Arrestee Data)

As this was a large complex project we experienced many challenges in the implementation stages that included contracts, role conflicts, and jurisdictional issues. The most unique and helpful aspects of the project (i.e. collaboration, partnering with new types of agencies, and forming relationships with agencies who had difficulty working together.) were also the areas that gave the project the most grief. Regardless of the challenges in establishing cooperative relationships; the comprehensive effort of this project is seen by all partners as the most beneficial outcome of the Salt Lake City COPS Methamphetamine Initiative.

Evaluation of our project is an area that we greatly benefited from. We benefited from having both a local and federal level evaluation although at times there did exist some cross over. The benefits included giving us ongoing impute in our efforts, challenging us to move forward, and providing the variety of involved partners a federal perspective.

REPLICATION:

Salt Lake City Police Department, the City Council, and the Mayor's Office are committed to the Meth Initiative project. The program became **funded** in the City's budget when the grants expired. Participating agencies absorbed program costs into their general funds. Partners continue to be committed to the project as they have witnessed the success in the community and additional support for their agencies goals. The original thirty partners of the Meth Initiative have pledged continued support and have reached out to additional agencies.

Replication of the Drug Endangered Children program is already underway with programs established in Salt Lake, West Valley and Ogden Cities. Salt Lake City Police Department recently hosted Utah's 1st Annual Drug Endangered Children Conference. The four-hundred attendees included medical, child protection, substance abuse treatment, law enforcement, judicial, educators and other professionals throughout Utah and other states.

As the Salt Lake City Methamphetamine Initiative moves into its next phase the partner's have established additional strategies. The plan includes state wide clean-up standards for chemically contaminated properties, refined medical procedures for drug exposed children, a longitudinal study of children exposed to methamphetamine, state wide drug endangered children programs linked with a national office, increased information sharing, a highly visible public awareness and training campaign, and increased treatment successes.

By working together, these agencies provided a comprehensive solution to cases involving methamphetamine and other dangerous drugs. Each agency has developed proactive strategies that work in collaboration with other partners.

AGENCY AND OFFICER INFORMATION:

This initiative was adopted by the entire department involving many outreaching agencies with a consolidated effort in the narcotics squad. Department personnel received Problem Oriented Policing training. Salt Lake City Police Department has a long standing history of Community Oriented Policing. Resources from grants expedited the implementation and the involved agencies have continued to contribute with this high priority project.

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Map 1

Methamphetamine Labs Discovered in Salt Lake City January 1, 1998 - January 20, 2000

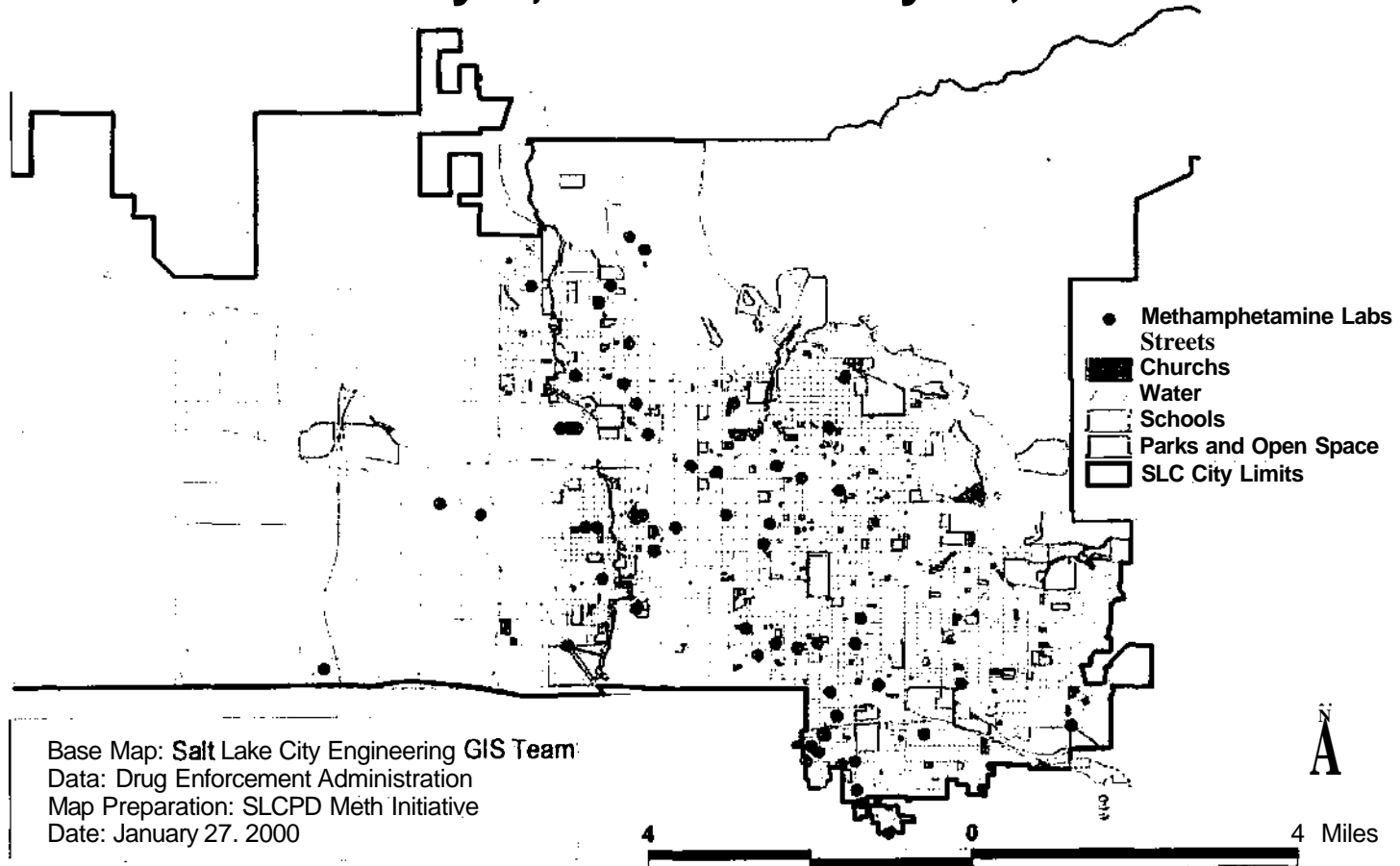


Table 1
 Number of Community Complaints Received on Salt Lake City
 Police Department Drug Hotline, Intel Office 1998-2002

	Community Complaints to Drug Hotline
1998	402
1999	657
2000	788
2001	880
2002	993

Graph 1

**COMMUNITY COMPLAINTS: DRUG ACTIVITY
 SALT LAKE CITY DRUG HOTLINE**

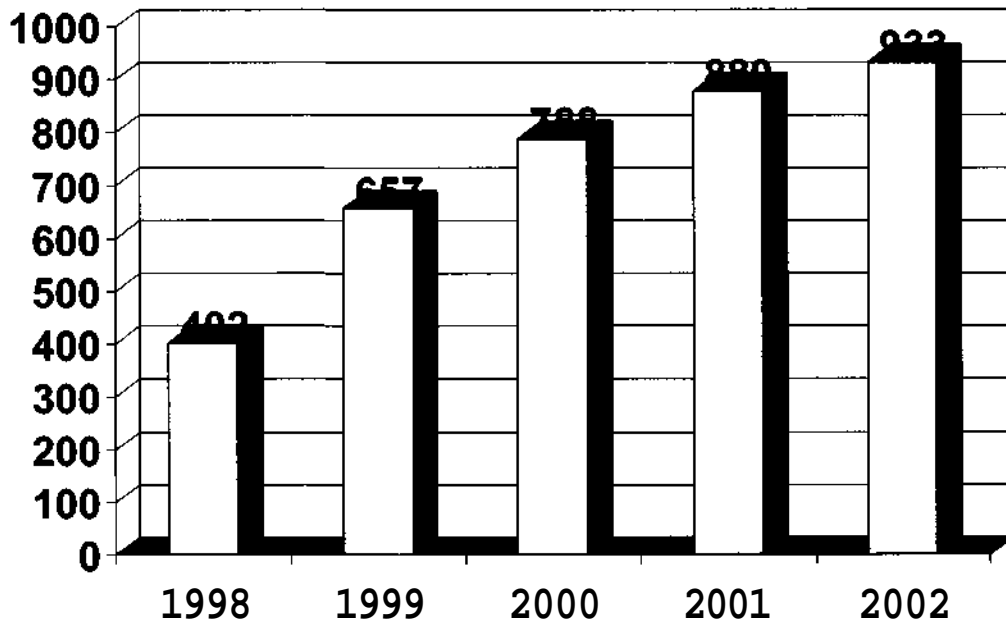
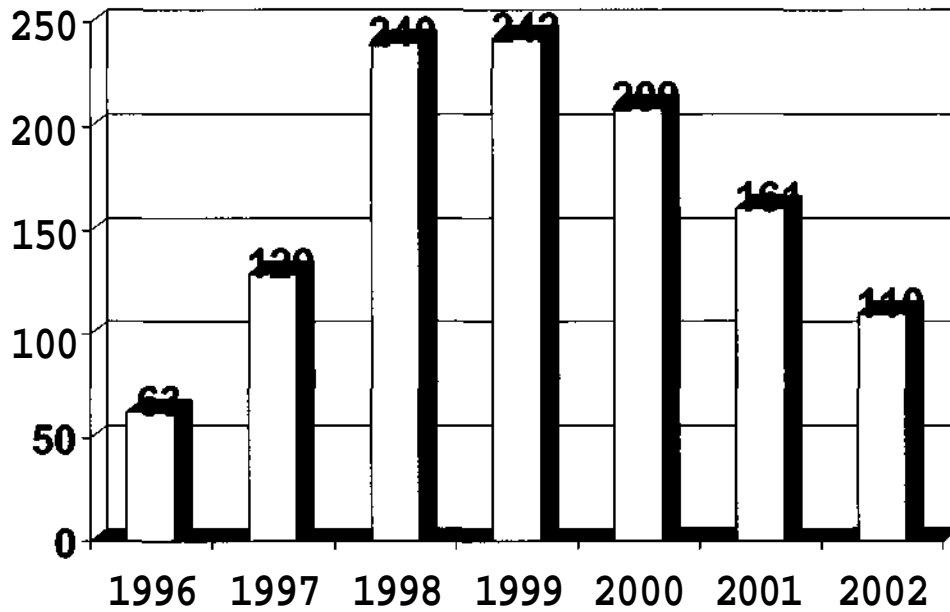


Table 2
 Number of Methamphetamine Labs Seized in
 Utah and Salt Lake City, PEA 1996-2002

	Labs Found in Utah	Labs Found in Salt Lake City
1996	63	20
1997	129	20
1998	240	23
1999	242	54
2000	209	43
2001	161	63
2002	110	28

Graph 2

**DEA CLANDESTINE LABORATORY SEIZURES
STATE OF UTAH**



Graph 3

**CLANDESTINE LABORATORY SEIZURES
SALT LAKE CITY**

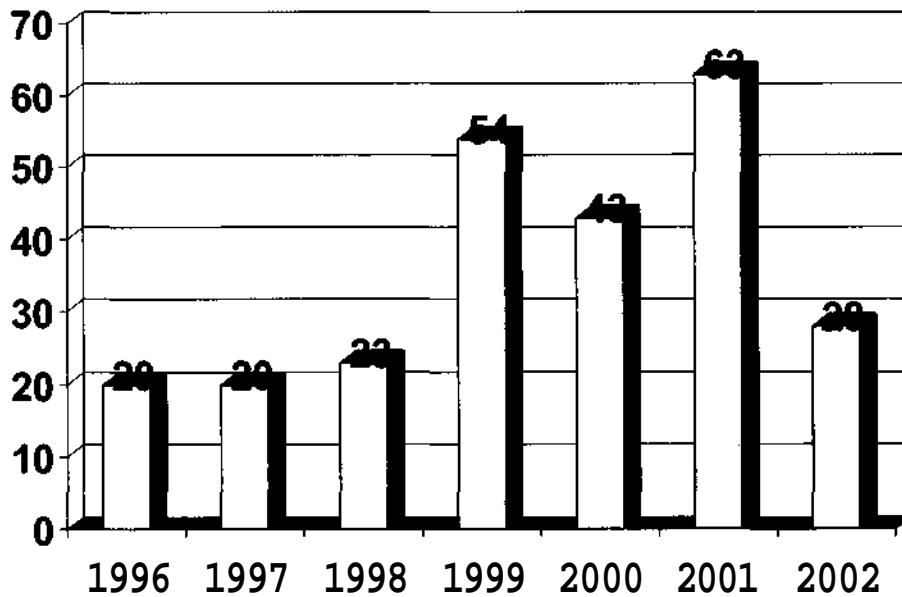


Table 3
 Percentage of Children Found at a Clandestine Drug Lab or High Use Drug Home
 Testing Positive for Drugs, Hair Analysis, Primary Children's Medical Center 2000-2002

	Percentage of Children Testing Positive by Hair Analysis
2000	40%
2001	50%
2002	54%

Graph 4

**Clandestine Lab Cases Filed Salt Lake County
 District Attorney's Office 2000-2002**

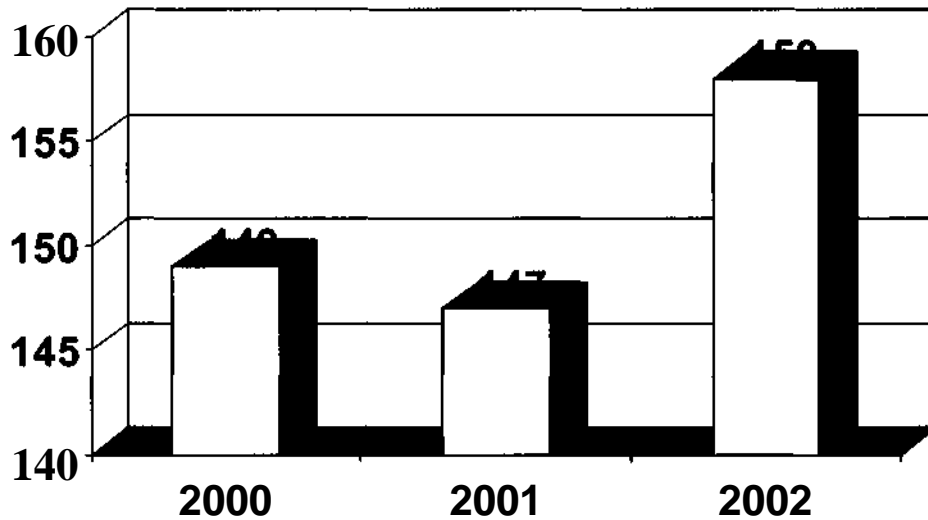
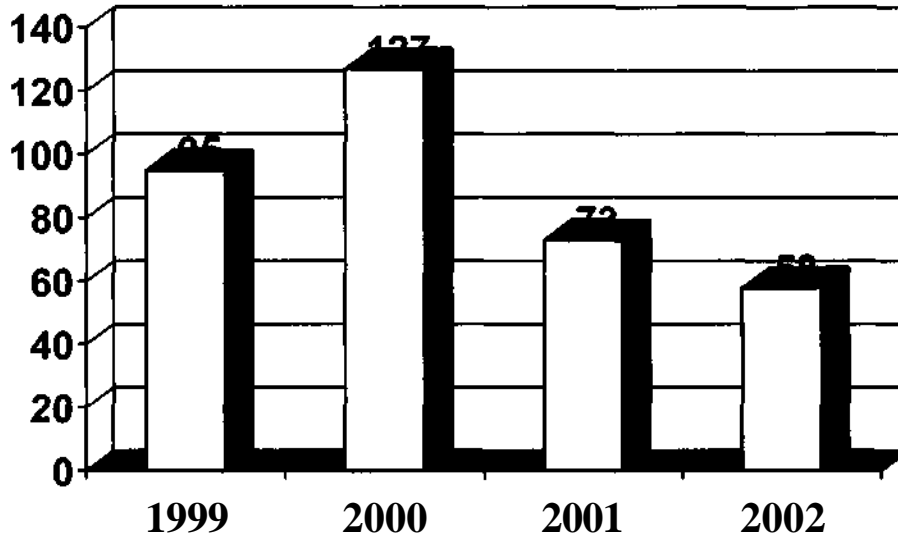


Table 4
 Salt Lake County Child Endangerment Cases Filed,
 Salt Lake County District Attorney's Office 2000-2002

	Child Endangerment Cases Filed
2000	18
2001	82
2002	124

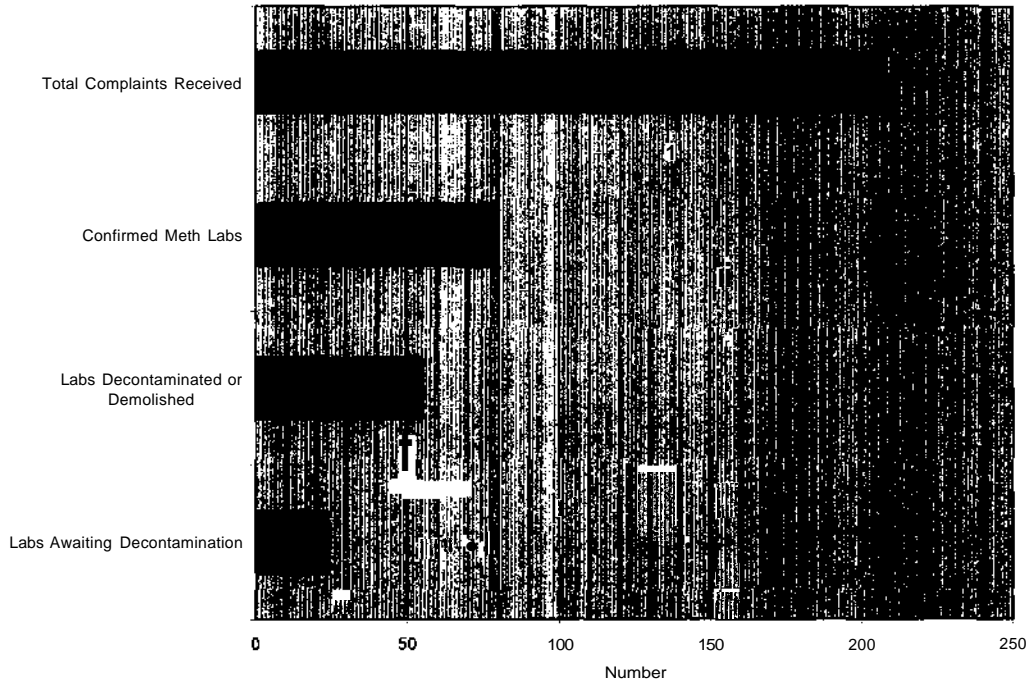
Graph 5

Children Found in Meth Labs or Drug Homes Salt Lake City



Graph 6

Meth Labs Reported to SLVHD since August 1, 2001





WASATCH RANGE TASK FORCE

Case Update March 4, 2003

Case No. 02 CR 0087 TS

On February 26, 2003, Scott D. Hemsley pled guilty as charged to Manufacture or Attempted Manufacture of Methamphetamine, in violation of 21 USC §841(a)(1), and Possession of a Firearm by a Restricted Person, in violation of 18 USC §922(g). Sentencing will occur on June 3, 2003.

On March 3, 2003, Patricia McClister pled guilty as charged to Conspiracy to Manufacture Methamphetamine, in violation of 21 USC §§841(a)(1) and 846. Sentencing will occur on June 17, 2003.

This case was adopted from the Salt Lake City Narcotics Unit. Detective Tyler Boelter worked very hard on this case, and should be commended, as well as DDA Lana Taylor who assisted SLC Narcotics, and who was instrumental in having the case ready for indictment.

This case arose from an investigation by Det. Boelter of a family that was consistently purchasing large quantities of iodine from the Chem Shop on Redwood Road. Between July 5, 2001 and December 11, 2001, Scott Hemsley, Krystal McClister Hemsley, Dean Christofferson, Patricia McClister, Christine McClister, Gerrin McClister, Cynthia Roach, Candise Roach and Max Jason Roach purchased, on over forty different occasions, purchased iodine from Hi-Valley Chemical (Redwood), located at 1151 South Redwood Road, in Salt Lake City, Utah. This iodine was purchased with the intent that it be used in the manufacture and production of methamphetamine. A total of 2,377.2 grams of iodine was purchased as part of the ongoing conspiracy.

A search warrant was executed by SLC Narcotics on December 11, 2001, at the Hemsley home in Salt Lake City, Utah. During this search warrant, 24.2 grams of methamphetamine, 2,145 individual pills containing 536.25 grams of pseudoephedrine, an additional 46.15 grams of pseudoephedrine, and two firearms were seized. The Hemsley's twelve year old daughter also tested positive for methamphetamine, and was removed from the home by DCFS workers.

Max Jason Roach previously was convicted in 3rd District Court, and is serving one year of jail, followed by three years of probation. The remaining co-defendants are scheduled to plead guilty next Monday and Tuesday.

Newsletter Articles

Meth Mania: Even Cops Duck for Cover

Salt Lake Tribune 28 Jan 1999

Busts are as risky as bullets in vast Utah crime epidemic

BY KELLY KENNEDY
THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

While questioning a forgery suspect living in a duplex, South Salt Lake Del. Dave Browning suddenly felt dizzy.

"The other officers said I was starting to list to one side," he said.

Fresh air didn't help. He began vomiting and was rushed to the hospital. Later, police discovered a methamphetamine lab in the other unit of the duplex. Fumes from the lab, combined with smoke from an officer's cigarette, had wafted to Browning.

"The doctor said my small airways were constricted," Browning said.

It is the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency's task to investigate illegal labs. But street cops and detectives usually happen upon most labs, said Jeff Payne, a DEA detective who specializes in methamphetamine labs.

Labs pose risks of violence, chemical toxins and long-term illness for officers across the nation and in Utah, where meth has reached epidemic proportions.

"We have the largest amount of meth labs per capita in the nation," Payne said. "Back in '91, '92 if you got a lab, that was something else. Now, we're online for 250 to 300 this year."

Said West Valley Police Lt. Charles Illsley: "Meth is the very worst crime scene we've encountered."

Violent Encounters: Meth chemists, or "cooks," are violent because virtually all use their own product. Typically, addicts can go without sleep for up to 15 days — making them delusional, volatile and irrational. Cooks have attacked lab invaders with scissors, chain saws and fire. Illsley said at least 40 percent booby-trap their labs with explosives and nerve agents.

"These folks are biohazards in and of themselves," Illsley said. "They have open sores, chemical burns, higher incidences of HIV, TB and hepatitis. They even sweat the by-products of these drugs."

Addicts can hide their needles in creative places, so jailers doing searches worry about being poked. On the streets, officers making routine stops or calls can be exposed to an array of toxic chemicals. Labs even pop up in cars.

Meth Lab's Dangerous Chemicals

Police are discovering methamphetamine laboratories during routine traffic stops, domestic dispute calls and undercover drug busts, exposing officers to toxic chemicals such as:

- ⊙ SODIUM HYDROXIDE (LYE):
Can burn or eat away skin
- ⊙ AMMONIA:
Can cause vomiting.
- ⊙ ETHER, ACETONE AND ALCOHOL:
Highly flammable or volatile liquids
- ⊙ CHLOROFORM:
Carcinogenic and volatile liquid
- ⊙ RED PHOSPHORUS:
Flammable
- ⊙ MERCURIC CHLORIDE:
Poisonous, used as an insecticide
- ⊙ CYANIDE GAS:
Extremely poisonous
- ⊙ HYDROCHLORIC AND SULFURIC ACIDS:
Can burn digestive and respiratory systems, skin and eyes. Can be absorbed through the skin.
- ⊙ IODINE:
Releases a corrosive, purple gas, irritating eyes and mucous membranes and causing headaches, nausea and dizziness.
- ⊙ PHOSPHANE GAS:
Colorless, poisonous, flammable gas. Used in World War I as a nerve agent.

Rhonda Hailes Maylett / The Salt Lake Tribune

"Meth labs in the trunk are a very popular reason for high-speed chases," Illsley said. "That endangers the officer and civilians."

And damage can affect officers' own families.

"There are lots of examples of foot pursuits where

Cleaning up illicit lab sites has become lucrative industry

BY PHIL SAHM
THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

Methamphetamine labs are a growth industry in Utah.

At any given time, the state rates between second and fourth nationwide in the total number of meth labs, and first in the number per capita, said Don Mendrala of the Drug Enforcement Agency.

The proliferation of illegal labs keeps police agencies increasingly busy. But it also has opened new avenues of business for hazardous-waste cleanup companies.

Every time a meth lab gets busied in a house, hotel, motel, apartment or storage locker, someone pays to have it cleaned up because the process of making the drug creates toxic chemicals.

In that regard, business is good, said Rob Yarosik of Chemical Waste Management, the company that holds the contract to clean up Utah meth labs after the DEA busts them.

"When we started in October 1997, we were probably doing two to three a week," Yarosik said.

Now, it's almost one a day.

From October 1997 to October 1998, Chemical Waste took calls from the DEA on 191 labs. Since last October, it already has answered 191 calls.

Chemical Waste came to Utah because of the meth contract, so almost all of its business in the state is cleaning meth labs.

After cleaning a lab, workers package the chemicals according to U.S. Department of Transportation and Environmental Protection Agency regulations, then ship them to a hazardous-waste incinerator in Illinois.

Other materials used to make meth — stoves, tubing, pots — go to a special landfill in California.

Utah meth labs, for the most part, are small operations with the average cost of cleanup ranging from \$2,000 to \$3,000, although some cost less. Occasionally, a larger lab costs \$5,000 to clean up, but those are rare, Yarosik said.

Bigger labs can cost up to \$20,000 to clean.

Ron Samford expanded his West Jordan business, Rocky Mountain Asbestos Abatement, to include clean-

Meth Mania Creates New Risks for Police

E Continued from B-1

you run right through the lab," Illsley said. "Then, the cop's kids are contaminated with chemicals daddy dragged in from the drug lab. We used to be able to say, 'I'm not in harms anymore.' Now, everyone encounters it on a daily basis."

Special Precautions: Special suits and ventilators don't eliminate all dangers.

For instance, DEA agents use flashlights in assessing labs so that sparks are minimized around explosive chemicals. Agents breathe through Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus masks and wear yellow plastic Tyvek clothes — dubbed banana suits.

"But all of that stuff is cumbersome, and we have to worry about heat exhaustion and fatigue," Payne said. "So we switch to lighter gear when we have to move."

That includes fire-resistant suits and military-style gas masks fitted with special filters.

"But the masks fog in the winter, are hot in the summer, and the bad guys can't understand us when we yell, 'Police!'" he said. "So we go in without them, secure it, and get out. Then we worry about the suits."

As backup, one person suits up and waits outside to help if officers are overcome by toxic fumes.

"It's a double-edged sword for SWAT," West Valley police Lt Illsley agreed. "They have to move quickly, yet [protective gear] will hinder their progress. But they're in and out — they're the least exposed. It's the uniforms [officers] investigating a case that I worry about."

Amateur Scientists: Worse, criminal meth cooks are untrained, or as Illsley puts it: "These guys are not gifted when it comes to organic chemistry."

Cook: begin by mixing ephedrine, hydriatic acid and red phosphorus. Then heating the mixture.

"Red phosphorous is toxic, highly flammable and if overheated, it will catch on fire or explode," Payne said. "It can become phosphane gas, which was used in World War I as a nerve agent."

Next, they strain the mixture to remove the red phosphorous.

When one officer walked through a lab house, there was so much red phosphorous in the carpet that sparks could be seen coming from his boots.

"Could you imagine if a SWAT team went through there?" Payne said. "The whole place would



Paul Fraughton/The Salt Lake Tribune

South Salt Lake Officer Scott Watson dusts lab ware for fingerprints after a meth raid. Often the structure housing the lab and the surrounding areas are contaminated with lethal remnant.

have gone up."

Lye is added to the mixture. (Lye can cause serious skin burns or damage airways.) Everything is thrown into a drum, usually 55-gallons, and Preon is added to force the meth to the bottom of the container. The mixture is drained and hydrogen chloride gas is added to convert meth. oil into powder.

"They distill these chemicals to get the meth out," Payne said. "But they ventilate the tanks to let out pressure, which also lets toxins into the air."

The amount of fumes and the potential for an explosion differ with each illegal lab. Some cooks don't follow a recipe — they just toss in chemicals until the mix looks right. Payne has seen cooks use antifreeze, highly explosive ether and alcohol, along with drain cleaner and lye.

Even trained chemists can have problems. At what was to be a simple demonstration during a conference in Kansas, a chemist inadvertently blew up a glass container.

"That was a chemist," Payne said. "Most of these meth cooks haven't even graduated from high school."

Particles and gases can contaminate entire rooms, often seeping into basements, ventilation systems and other apartments.

Health Effects: Meth causes nausea, dizziness and headaches, said Payne. "But it's really never been studied. We don't know the long-term effects."

He knows of officers who sat on red-phosphorous-covered furniture, then tracked the chemicals to their own homes. One officer stepped into a liquid substance, and not realizing the danger, wore his boots every day. He noticed that he felt sick at work and at home. In civilian shoes, he felt fine. "You have to wonder: Headache? Where's it from?" said

Payne. "It's hard to say unless it gets worse and you track it back to exposure."

Illsley said he will never forget Dec. 21, 1982 — the day he first encountered a lab.

"We'd go outside, get some fresh air, then go back in," he said. "In the '70s and '80s, there was a whole generation of officers who investigated clandestine labs without any protection."

Two years ago, Portland, Ore., approved disability claims from several officers who developed rare forms of cancer. Three had non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, another had emphysema and a fifth officer bone marrow cancer, the Law Enforcement News reported.

"There are guys who worked it for 20 years, retired, and just now are starting to show ill effects," Illsley said. "But it's hard to link it back to the labs. There are so many chemicals used in so many ways, it would be hard to trace."

Salt Lake police Sgt. Craig Gleason remembers seeing his first lab in a hotel room, three years ago.

"We didn't know exactly what to do," he said. "Then I remember the DEA guys taking our clothes and washing our shoes after they found out we went in."

Now, he tells officers to stay back.

"As a patrol supervisor, I had two guys find a lab in a car," he said. "When I got there, they were sitting on the side of the curb disoriented. They had to be taken to the hospital."

The DSA offers classes, expertise and backup. Web sites can help too. One, www.meth.com, discusses meth addicts; www.lifeformeth.org features help links; and www.stopdrugs.org shows lab equipment.

"We haven't had any police officers die from this yet in Utah," Illsley said. "The Lord watches out for us, but we still need to look out for ourselves."



Trent Nelson/The Salt Lake Tribune

Corrina Valdez, of Utah Disaster Kleenup, clears chemicals from former meth lab at about 3300 South and 3500 West in West Valley City. The entire house must be gutted, cleaned.

Cleanup Crews Find Meth Lab Messes Lucrative

Continued from B-1

up of meth contaminants in February 1998. He goes into houses or other places where a meth lab has been dismantled and gets rid of the residue from cooking the drug.

Utah has no regulations regarding the cleanup of hazardous waste or toxic chemicals created when people cook methamphetamine, said Pat Knell of the Salt Lake County Health Department.

The county oversees cleanup of meth labs by enforcing housing regulations, Knell said. But it's still somewhat new territory for county regulators.

The county can close a house or other building that contained a meth lab. A company can clean the house, but there's no definitive way to determine whether hazardous wastes or contami-

nants have been removed, Knell said.

"Is wiping a wall good enough?" she said. "Or does the wall have to come down."

Knell relies on the expertise of cleanup companies.

The state someday may draft regulations regarding meth lab cleanup. But for now, the county remains on its own.

Knell said she does not know of other states where local health departments are overseeing cleanup of meth labs.

When Samford sends his workers to clean the site of a former meth lab a main concern — given the lifestyle of some who make meth — is protecting them against hepatitis or HIV, which causes AIDS.

"These people have pretty wild sex," he said. "We find a lot of videos."

Most meth labs are set up in homes. But motels, hotels and extended-stay inns are targets, too.

A maid at the Comfort Inn Suites in Sandy discovered that late last year when she walked into a room that did not look right.

There were too many people in

the room. There was too much stuff, manager Steve Moss said.

"She just knew something was wrong," Moss said.

Hotel staff called the police and although it was not a working meth lab, it appeared the guests were setting up one, Moss said. The occupants were supposed to check out that morning and apparently were going to move into an extended-stay inn.

Instead, they went to jail.

Sandy has no more of a problem with meth labs than any other part of the valley, and it may have less, Mendrala said. But when the Sandy Police Department held two classes to teach hotel and motel workers how to spot the signs of people who set up meth labs, they were well-attended.

The hospitality industry in general is more scrutinizing of guests now.

When people pay cash, more hotels and motels require photo identification and a credit card. And even if guests do not want maid service, they get it every other day.

"It's become pretty standard practice in the hotel business," said Moss, of Comfort Inn Suites.

30 Local Agencies Brainstorm for War on Meth

Salt Lake police obtain nearly \$1 million in federal grants. They will coordinate the effort

BY KELLY KENNEDY
THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

Methamphetamine addicts combined with young children, neighbors and inconsistent prosecution make a volatile mixture.

But bringing together 30 local agencies and nearly a million dollars could mean hope for those caught up in the mix — including the addict.

"We're working together to make the community stronger," said Marjean Wood, project coordinator for the new Meth and Drug Initiative. "We've got 30 agencies meeting monthly to talk about their cases and how they can better handle them."

The Salt Lake City Police Department spearheaded the project by applying for two federal grants: a \$750,000 Advanced Community Policing Grant, received in January, and a \$112,574 grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, received in May.

Now, West Valley and Salt Lake police are meeting with the Environmental Protection Agency, Drug Enforcement Agency, the Division of Child and Family Services, district attorney's offices and health agencies and others.

"Methamphetamine is an area that needs more emphasis," said Salt Lake Police Lt. John Hodson, project manager. "This way, we have more agen-

cies working to handle every aspect of the problem."

The grant also pays for a full-time data analyst, health work, DCFS person located at the police department and an attorney to work on prosecution.

Through a team effort, Hodson hopes to address everything from chemical dependency, by calling in counselors, to the criminal aspects, by making stronger laws, to helping families by involving DCFS, to social problems by helping communities.

"Instead of handling meth the way we have, we'll train our officers to think past the drug," Hodson said. "They'll ask themselves, 'Are there children in the house? Elderly people? In addition to the DEA, do we need youth detectives?' These are things we're working on with this grant."

The community decided to concentrate on meth because it is different from other drugs, Wood said.

"Meth has its own special aspects," she said. "The onset [of the high] is quicker, and the duration is longer. To fight that addiction is going to be much harder."

In addressing meth problems, Wood and Hodson say the program will include oilier narcotics, because many hard drug users try heroin, cocaine and meth.

Meth is an all-encompassing prob-

lem, and it can affect every aspect of a community, Wood said. For instance:

■ Children grow up around toxic chemicals or without parents who can't break an addiction.

• Meth cooks dump their toxic chemicals down their kitchen sinks or in ditches, which can be costly to clean up.

• People who make meth are usually high, and work with volatile chemicals, which could mean fires and explosions.

■ Homeowners renting to meth lab cooks are responsible for cleanup, which is expensive.

■ People moving into a new home or apartment may encounter chemicals from an illegal lab that was never properly decontaminated.

• Police, paramedics, social workers or even carpet cleaners could be overcome by toxic fumes.

• Finally, meth addicts face health, financial and criminal problems.

Some funds have already been used for the Dependency Drug Court operated by Juvenile Courts. This program helps keep families together by forcing addicts to stop using meth so they can see their children. The offender meets with a judge once every two weeks, and is tested for drugs weekly.

"There's some real teeth in that," Wood said. "It's not that we'll have a lot of foster children — we're trying to

gel kids back into a good place. Some of the stories we hear about children are really concerning."

To curtail that, Wood and Hodson are setting up a team that will seek stricter child endangerment laws.

"Right now, you get a class A misdemeanor for a lot of these [crimes]," Wood said. "We're hoping for a child endangerment statute."

Wood also has started training community members about meth: what activities might go on outside a meth house, what the drug looks like, what community members can do and how to stay safe.

For more information on this program, call Wood at (MM) 799-3357. The training is free.

The project's data analyst, Kim Ritzman, will keep track of meth offenders, prosecutions, what happens to their children, where drugs are sold and by whom, and vehicle license-plate numbers of people who frequent drug houses.

"With this information, we'll be able to show what we've accomplished and what we need to work on," Ritzman said.

Said Wood: "Realistically, you're going to see a real difference in the long term. We see the same people over and over — maybe by working with the oilier agencies, we can stop that."



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January 27, 2000

More Financial Horsepower

Anti-Meth Campaign

Jan. 25, 2000

A new challenge for the methamphetamine problem in Utah. A campaign will kick off next week that targets meth manufacturers and users.



It's the first time the State Department of Substance Abuse has launched a major anti-drug message, and experts expect it to have a big impact. Crime Specialist Karen Scullin explains.

Thirty billboards across Utah will soon have a new message that targets meth manufacturers. It's only part of a campaign to fight the growing meth problem in this state. Good timing, say Drug Agents. The meth problem in 1999 showed no signs of improvement.

Over the last few years in Utah, drug agents have tackled about one meth lab a day. Unfortunately, nothing's changed. We still rank third or fourth in the nation for the number of meth labs busted.

In 1998 there were 290, 1999 about 271. And so far this year, we're running pretty much the same. But there is some good news.

Don Mendrala/D.E.A.: THE NUMBER OF PRO ACTIVE LABS IS GOING UP. WE'RE TAKING THE FIGHT TO THE BAD GUYS.

Meaning in the past, meth labs were discovered as a result of an investigation into another problem. Mendrala says they're now getting a lot of tips from the community.

And that's what the State Department of Substance Abuse is banking on as well. They're getting ready to launch a new campaign to fight meth.

B.J. Van Roosendaal/State Dept. of Substance Abuse: METH IS SUCH A GROWING PROBLEM. IT'S ESPECIALLY A PROBLEM BECAUSE MORE WOMEN THAN MEN ARE USING METH. AND THAT IS THE FIRST TIME THAT'S HAPPENED WITH ANY SUBSTANCE ABUSE THAT WE'VE TRACKED.

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Thirty billboards will go up to target meth manufacturers, asking what's cooking in your neighborhood?

A meth hotline will allow citizens to call if they think they have a lab in their neighborhood.

And for anyone needing help or information on meth, public service announcements will also run on radio and television with a separate toll free number anyone can call.

B.J. Van Rosendaal: WE WANT TO REACH THE GENERAL POPULATION OF COURSE. BUT WOMEN ARE OUR SPECIFIC TARGET. WOMEN 18 TO 34.

The campaign kicks off next Wednesday.

The major campaign is a joint effort by several agencies, including Salt Lake City Police and the Utah Council on Crime Prevention. The initial campaign will run about six weeks, but the toll free help lines are here to stay.

For More Info:

- [State Division of Substance Abuse](#)
- [Links to Anti-Meth web sites](#)

From Eyewitness News Archives:

- [Meth Lab in Your Neighborhood?](#)
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MONDAY BUSINESS SECTION MAKES ITS DEBUT / D-1

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Utah's Homegrown Meth Labs Creating an Epidemic of Addicted Tots

BY MICHAEL VIGIL

THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

After police raided a suspected Salt Lake City drug house recently, they found a working methamphetamine lab, loaded firearms and several open jugs of toxic chemicals.

They also discovered two filthy, hungry boys. An adult in the home was jailed for operating a meth lab and for child abuse. Later, blood and hair tests of one of the boys revealed the presence of meth-

amphetamine in his system.

"He tested positive and has exhibited withdrawal symptoms," said Lisa Jorgensen, an investigator with Utah's Child Protective Services. "He's a 5-year-old addict." The boy's 2-year-old brother also was found to have traces of meth in his system.

Call it the "crack baby" epidemic for the new millennium.

Experts say Utah's standing as a haven for "Mom and Pop" meth labs is causing untold damage to children who live in drug-addled homes where adults brew

toxic mixtures on their kitchen stoves. Used needles, beakers with drug residue and contaminated vials are typically scattered on the floor where infants crawl and play.

Authorities who must wade through the chemical mess left by the home-cooked high are worried about the long-term negative consequences for children who grow up in such an environment.

"When one of these drug houses is discovered, it's not uncommon for our agents to be in moon suits while babies are

crawling around in diapers," said Don Mendrala, federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) spokesman.

Young children become addicted to the drugs when they inhale second-hand smoke or sample chunks of crystal meth left lying on the floor. Likewise, pregnant women who smoke or snort the highly addictive — and cheap — drugs often get their unborn children addicted, Jorgensen said.

Indeed, the most frequent users of meth

See HIGH METH USE, Page A-5

High Meth Use In Utah Causes Tots to Suffer

• Continued from A-1

are women between the ages of 20 and 35 — the age of childbearing, said Pat Knell of the Salt Lake County Health Department.

The effects on children are not widely known because long-term studies have not been done on the newly recognized problem. What is known, Knell said, is that children go through some of the same withdrawal symptoms of vomiting, diarrhea and chronic sickness as their "tweaking" — street slang for users of meth — parents.

"It takes two years to get off meth," she said. "You feel pretty rotten for about two years."

Parents addicted to meth are more concerned about their next high than ensuring their children receive adequate care. The results

are predictable.

"These are some of the most abused and neglected children I've ever seen," Jorgensen said at the 10th Annual Utah Gang Conference held recently in downtown Salt Lake City. "The house is filthy, the kids are missing school and they are always sick. In some cases, the only meal they get is at school."

Added Mendrala of the DEA: "The abuse is broad, encompassing. The focus for users is on the drug; family, food and personal hygiene take a distant second. Kids are not going to be cared for, fed or bathed with any regularity."

When a working meth lab is discovered by police, the children are automatically removed from the home, given a mental health screening and moved to foster homes. After they are removed from the toxic environment, they begin the healing process. The road to recovery, though, is a long one for children addicted to the drug.

"They go through withdrawals and feel terrible," Jorgensen said. "We see developmental delays and

hearing loss."

The adverse effects are not just physical. Experts fear the meth-house epidemic will create a class of social deviants, people prone to violence and who abhor law officers.

"In tweakers' homes we see drugs, guns and very hard-core porn," Jorgensen said. "We get a lot of very neglected and sexually abused kids."

Jorgensen said people on meth frequently enjoy pornography and some like to take photographs of themselves and others engaging in lewd acts. The pictures and pornographic magazines are often scattered around the home, easily accessible to children.

"I've seen a 3-year-old who can describe sexual acts and sees nothing wrong with it," Jorgensen said. "These kids — and I'm talking 10 and under — seem to have no inhibitions."

Children who live in the meth culture learn from parents who have loaded handguns scattered around the house and are willing to use gunfire to protect their illegal operations, experts say. The

drugs can net about \$25 on the street for two hits, but many meth cooks make the drugs to satisfy their own cravings, Knell said.

"People on meth become violent, paranoid, and they're well-armed," she said. "To them, everyone is a cop."

The burgeoning meth culture doesn't seem to be slowing down in Utah, officials say. Last year, for example, 266 labs were discovered by police around the state. Only four other states — California, Missouri, Arkansas and Arizona — had more. On a per capita basis, Utah remains the No. 1 meth state in the United States, a dubious trend that began a few years ago in a state known for its squeaky-clean image.

Meanwhile, the boys found in the Salt Lake City drug house are doing OK, but will live with the effects of growing up in a meth lab for some time.

"They slept for two days, they went through sweating, cramping, diarrhea and have developmental problems," Jorgensen said. "They are in a foster home and are going to be in counseling and rehab for years to come."

Meth tears apart the lives of children

They live in filthy, dangerous homes, social worker says

By Jennifer Dobner
Deseret News staff writer

OGDEN — Social worker Lisa Jorgensen has a lot of chilling and sad stories about how the drug **methamphetamine** has ravaged the lives of her clients.

On Wednesday at the 13th Annual Mountain West Conference on Child Abuse and Domestic Violence at Weber State University she told this one:

After two years of using, her male client has lost most of his ability to complete basic daily tasks. He exhibits violent tendencies and is antisocial, believing that societal rules don't really apply to him. Physically, he suffers heart problems and **hearing** loss from the drug use. He is off the drug now but continues to exhibit all the classic signs of withdrawal. His whole life has revolved around meth, as has that of his family, most

of whom are doing time in the state prison.

He is 5 years old.

"At best, I'd say his prognosis is guarded. Where do you get a **5-year-old** into (drug) treatment?" said Jorgensen, who handles child protection cases for the Division of Child and Family services. "In five years of investigating child protective cases for DCFS these are absolutely the most abused and neglected children I've ever seen. They are the worst cases I've ever worked."

Meth kids typically live in chaotic environments that are filthy and filled with dangerous chemicals. They are mostly unsupervised. Their homes are usually filled with unsecured firearms and lots of pornography. If their parents are meth cooks, which most of them are, the kids live in constant danger of fire and deadly explosions. Their parents, who are consumed by paranoia because of the drug, "don't eat, don't **sleep** . . . stop caring about anything except the drug, and (they) don't take care of their kids," Jorgensen said.

Among her other clients are a **3-year-old** who has watched her mother act out scenes from porno-

graphic movies with a boyfriend and an 8-year-old who can give detailed descriptions of the meth cooking process, which she explained as the "scientific experiments" mom and her boyfriend performed in the kitchen.

"On the same stove where the food was cooked," Jorgensen said.

As a member of a one-year-old meth task force, Jorgensen works in partnership with Salt Lake and West Valley police, the Drug Enforcement Administration and state and county attorneys to get these kids out of danger faster. When the cops bust down the door of a suspected meth home, Jorgensen is right behind them, whisking the kids away to shelter **care**.

Between Jan. 29 and March 27, the task force was involved in 164 meth incidents. There were 54 children in those raided homes, and 35 were removed into DCFS custody. A recent survey of social workers in Salt Lake County showed that about 65 percent of the children being removed from parental custody are in some way related to meth. The average **age** of children in custody in a meth case is 5.8 years, Jorgensen said.

But as concerned as she is for

the children, she is also concerned about the risks meth homes present to social workers. Many times other care issues mean that DCFS workers are already involved in the lives of these families. When a social worker makes a home visit, he or she could be exposed to harmful meth chemicals.

"Before I understood what I was looking at, I was walking into meth homes all the time," said Jorgensen.

Workers should be immediately suspicious of homes where they see large quantities of match books, over-the-counter **decongestants**, bottles of acetone or lye. Hoses, funnels, and science-lab **glassware** are also good clues.

If a worker walks in and sees paraphernalia like that, turn around and walk right out, Jorgensen advised.

"I always say it's a really good time to get a page," she said grasping the pager clipped to her belt. "Be careful, you don't want to confront them. And you don't ever want to let the user know that you know what you just saw. Just get out of there and call the police."

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Cops May Be Gaining in War On Meth Production in Utah

State no longer No. 1 in per capita busts of illegal labs, DEA reports

BY MICHAEL VIGH

THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

Utah's infamous run as the nation's leader in methamphetamine production may finally be ending, according to the federal Drug Enforcement Administration.

Following a six-year trend in which meth lab busts sharply increased in the state, the DEA on Thursday reported an 18 percent decline for the fiscal year, which ends on Saturday.

"No one is saying we don't have more work to do," said Don Mendrala, DEA agent-in-charge, at an afternoon news conference in downtown Salt Lake City. "The number is still too high."

Utah law officers seized 225 labs in fiscal 2000, compared with 266 the year before. The Beehive State, which has been the nation's per capita leader in meth lab seizures for several years, has now dropped to No. 2 — just behind neighboring Nevada.

Overall, Utah ranks 10th in the

total number of meth labs uncovered by police. Last year, only four other states — California, Missouri, Arkansas and Arizona — had more busts than Utah.

Mendrala credits a methamphetamine task force — comprising the DEA, police and prosecutors — for the sharp decrease. He also credits an emphasis on laws that make methamphetamine ingredients — ephedrine, iodine and red phosphorous — illegal in large quantities.

"And people are finally starting to go to jail for these crimes because of aggressive prosecution," Mendrala said.

Methamphetamine abuse is among the top causes of crime in Utah, police say, and can lead to child abuse and homicide. The highly addictive, toxic — and cheap — drug is cooked on home stoves across the nation. Methamphetamine is smoked, injected, inhaled and even eaten.

Young children are particularly at risk when adults brew toxic

chemicals. For example, flasks containing poisonous mixtures often are placed or stored near children's milk or food. Officers have even found vials of drugs next to infants' bottles and pacifiers.

Criminals who use the drug become paranoid, often arm themselves and are more prone to violence, according to police.

Mendrala said more than 90 percent of Utah meth labs are discovered along the Wasatch Front. He conceded, however, that aggressive enforcement has pushed the labs to rural areas.

"We see meth labs happen in neighborhoods all over the valley," said Salt Lake City Assistant Police Chief Scott Folsom. "Meth is everywhere and that's what makes it such a crisis in the community."

Folsom said methamphetamine is the most popular drug in the area. "We are seeing gigantic increases in the use of meth," he said. "Club drugs, like Ecstasy, are just now appearing on the radar screen."

SPEED TRAP

BY JACOB SANTINI and ASHLEY ESTES
THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

Tifney Smith went from a size 10 to a size zero.

Single mother Suzi Cappelli got by on two hours sleep, using the extra hours to clean her home and entertain her 5-year-old son.

For a couple of minutes of work, Alesha Schmidt made at least \$400 a day.

At first, the women said, methamphetamine seemed the answer to their problems. But the drug that seemed to give them so much quickly turned on them, eventually taking over their lives and turning them from superwives and moms into junkies.

Like thousands of women across Utah who have tangled with meth, 26-year-old Jill Bartschi of Salt Lake City had divided loyalties. First came meth. Then came her husband and 3-year-old son.

"There were a lot of times I'd put a movie on [for my son] and say, 'God, just watch the movie and let me get high,'" said Bartschi, who worked as a school principal's assistant for two years while using meth. "I had all these little rationalizations, justifications, addict rules - you can't use it if he's in the room. But if he's in the bathtub, I can run in the other room and get high."

The stories of these women, all recovering meth addicts, aren't unique. There is an alarming sameness to them: At first, meth seems like a wonder drug that makes everything possible, from losing weight to finding endless hours of stamina.

Almost inevitably, though, users lose everything they thought they gained, and much, much more.

Simply put, methamphetamine is a powerful, cheap stimulant that lures users at nearly every socioeconomic level. It is the one drug Utah women abuse at a rate nearly equal to that of men, and the repercussions affect children, families and even state government.

In 1999, 34 percent of the women booked into the Salt Lake County Jail tested positive for meth, according to a National Institute of Justice report. Of 34 metro areas surveyed, only San Diego, at 36 percent, was higher.

The same report ranked Salt Lake-area men third in the nation for using meth — but they were only 25 percent of those booked into jail.

In 2000, nearly half of the 3,449 people who entered publicly funded treatment in Utah for meth were women, according to the state's Division of Substance Abuse. By comparison, women have made up fewer than a third of users seeking treatment for other drugs.

The scope of the meth problem is undoubtedly much larger, however, since these numbers reflect only users receiving publicly funded treatment, said Angela Smart, a research consultant for the division.

Even more frightening: The female meth user is most often also a meth mother.

State statistics show 90 percent of women admitted for meth treatment have dependent children. And most female users are between the ages of 18 and 32, typical child-bearing years.

Officials are sounding a warning: if the current rate of abuse by women, particularly mothers, continues, nearly all state agencies, from child services to education and drug treatment, will be affected.

"I've worked with child protection for six years, and these are absolutely the most abused and neglected children I've seen," said Lisa Jorgensen, a caseworker for the Division of Child and Family Services.

Skinny Supermoms: Smith, now 29, was looking for more hours in the day when she tried meth four years ago. She had a 6-year-old son at home in Clearfield and worked a full-time job. "It just seemed like there was always somewhere to be, something to be doing," she said.

On meth, she said, "I'd feel I could paint the side of the house with a toothbrush."

Meth's attraction to women is simple: a single dose — snorted, smoked, swallowed or injected — awakens a user's senses and supplies them with a feeling of overwhelming vigor. They stay awake for days or even weeks during binges.

Smith's closet was a study in meth-triggered obsession. Black shirts on black hangers. Green ones on green hangers. White on white. All of her pants hung on rose-colored hangers. T-shirts, also hanging on white hangers, were alphabetized by the words on them.

"I don't think a lot of [women] are trying it for recreation," said Smart, who surveys incoming inmates at the Salt Lake Metro Jail and state prison each year. "They're taking it to clean their homes after coming home from working two jobs."

Michelle Young, a mother of three from Kearns, initially found family happiness with meth. One morning, a friend offered her a line of meth to snort. Over the next several months, Young, a high-school dropout who had earned a GED and become a gas station manager, began doing a line or two every other day, spending about \$20 a week.

"I could spend time with my children. I had time for my husband. I was getting all of the housework done. Everybody was happy.

"I was a foster parent. I was a room mother. You name it, I was doing it. That's why I liked meth so much. It made me supermom."

That was in 1994. By the time she was arrested six years later, Young was a meth fiend, smoking as much as an ounce daily.

There's also another attraction for women — quick weight loss. Meth works as an appetite suppressant, similar to "generic speed" diet pills popular decades ago. Some women call meth "Jenny Crank," a reference to Jenny Craig diets.

Trying the drug for the first time, Bartschi was amazed to find she hadn't snacked in hours. At the time of her last arrest in late 2000, Schmidt had dwindled to 98 pounds — 32 pounds below her normal weight.

Thrill Ride: For many, using meth is a thrill ride.

"Have you ever been skydiving? It's the biggest thing you've ever done that's so scary but the funnest," Smith said.

Smith started using meth after watching her boyfriend come home from a 20-hour work day and still have energy to wash his truck. She endured the eye-watering, gagging effects of snorting before she began smoking the drug.

"I'm not going to lie, meth is a lot of fun," says Smith, who is currently in a treatment program at the Davis County Jail's Work Center.

Cappelli, a 32-year-old with auburn curls and wholesome looks, started using drugs and alcohol at age 13, moving on to cocaine in her 20s.

A single mom, she initially pledged to stay away from meth. But friends told her it produced a better high than cocaine, and lasted longer. Plus, she said, it was cheaper.

Friends told her she would be fine if she remembered to lie down for two hours a day and to eat something. She would sleep from 4 to 6 a.m., then have a cup of coffee and a hit of meth before waking her son for school.

"I used to tell people I was a functional drug addict because I could hold down a job," said Cappelli, who held various jobs — operating a cement mixer, driving a truck — during her addiction.

Good Intentions: West Valley City Police Lt. Charles Illsley says meth addiction follows a predictable cycle. "It starts out a well-meaning attempt to organize a household, to look better and get a husband and to hold down a job."

But the love affair between women and meth sours quickly.

The 22-year-old Schmidt graduated from Roy High School in 1998 with a 3.5 GPA. Shortly before graduation, she was introduced to meth by her boyfriend's mother. She became a manager of a warehouse for a scrapbook company, and her meth use increased — to as much as a "teener," a sixteenth of an ounce, daily.

She soon lost that job because of meth. Even as her habit increased, Schmidt became a certified nursing assistant and worked at an assisted living center. But chronic lateness, which she blames on her meth use, got her fired.

Schmidt's habit was soon costing her hundreds of dollars a day. She started selling meth. At her peak, she was selling an ounce of meth a day and turning at least a \$400 profit in just minutes while sending \$900 to her meth cook.

Besides the easy money, Schmidt fell in love with the methamphetamine lifestyle that included plenty of power and no responsibilities.

"Quick money. Fast money. People will do anything to get high," said Schmidt, who is completing the final

weeks of the court-ordered drug treatment program.

"I was smart. I really was at one time," Schmidt said. "Being high all the time - it's got to do something to you."

Today, she thinks she has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and is nagged by forgetfulness.

Meth is "going to nail anybody who fools around with it for more than two or three months," said Alex Stalcup, medical director of the New Leaf Treatment Center in Concord, Calif., who is widely regarded as an international expert on methamphetamine.

As addiction takes hold, users begin consuming more and more, while neglecting family, home and work. Lack of sleep, coupled with drug use, results in paranoia.

Cappelli saw people following her, looking through her blinds. She picked at her face until it bled. She chased one woman with a crowbar. "I thought I was 10 feet tall and bulletproof," she said.

In the grips of addiction, many women are unable to keep their jobs, clean their homes or even take care of the basic needs of their children. Their behavior turns compulsive.

Cappelli spent a lot of time taking her car apart, trying to fix it and make it run better. "I know absolutely nothing about cars," she said. "But if you would have asked me then, I would have told you exactly what I was doing."

Longtime meth users become increasingly recognizable, authorities say. Their teeth fall out. Their hair thins. They become malnourished.

"Everybody talks about the people in New York or the guy living under the railroad bridge who is shooting heroin into his gums because he can't find a good vein. That's disgusting," said Patrick Fleming, director of the state Division of Substance Abuse. "If you see a person that's used methamphetamine for a long time, they're not much different."

Like Schmidt, many women turn to selling the drug to fund their own habits. Some help manufacture it.

"I couldn't stop," Young said. "I started running out of energy. My whole life became chasing crank."

By 1997, after three years of meth use, she was selling the drug and helping cooks get the chemicals to make it.

"My world was crumbling," she said. "I was losing my house. I lost my husband. I was about to lose my car. Shortly after that, I lost my job."

She eventually went to jail. But some addicts — and their children — pay an even higher price.

Dayna Pittman, 42, of La Verkin, gave birth to a stillborn daughter on Jan. 17, 1998. The medical examiner's office found methamphetamine in the baby's system. Pittman was charged with felony child abuse homicide, the first Utahn charged in the drug-related death of a fetus. She pleaded no contest and was imprisoned for up to 15 years.

In a recent telephone interview from Utah State Prison, a tearful Pittman said she knew immediately the baby's death was her fault. She could not look her husband and eldest daughter, 23, in the eyes.

A counselor talked her into holding the baby. "I just remember it being the worst moment in my life," she said. "Looking at her, it made me sick."

"How could I be so sick to ignore a human inside me? It nauseates me," Pittman said.

Pittman had used meth in the past, but began relying on it in 1996, when her husband, a concrete worker, broke his pelvis and could not work. She went from being a stay-at-home mom to their daughter, 15, and son, 14, to working two jobs — hotel housekeeper and restaurant cook — while also selling tamales out of her family's mobile home.

Meanwhile, she said, she was drinking dozens of beers a night and using meth to keep her upright.

After her release from prison, she wants to show other women the tiny casts of her dead daughter's hand and foot and urge them to prevent future deaths.

Smallest Victims: The little girl was adamant - her parents didn't use drugs.

But, she told Jorgensen, the DCFS caseworker, they frequently conducted "science experiments."

Jorgensen saw a different story inside the child's home. A container of acetone on the floor and iodine stains on the stove pointed to a clandestine meth lab. Until recently, Jorgensen took care of children while the Salt Lake Police Department executed search warrants and busts of homes suspected to contain drug labs. She estimated 75 percent of those cases were meth-related.

Most mothers using meth try to keep the drug from their children. Cappelli did not allow drug deals in the house — unless her son wasn't there or was asleep — and kept the drugs out of his sight. Her stash was kept in a dresser drawer, too high for him to reach; Cappelli would retreat to her bedroom, sometimes accompanied by friends, to get high.

"I'm sure he knew," she said. "When Mom goes and hides in the bedroom for four hours at a pop, I'm sure you know something's going on."

In meth homes, contamination shows up on objects like baby bottles or children's beds. "That's not just in lab homes. That's in high-use homes," Jorgensen said. One of her photos shows an open drawer with a meth pipe laying next to a pacifier.

Some children experience withdrawal after being removed from a meth home. "We had one little 5-year-old - the shelter mom didn't know what was wrong with him. He slept for 48 hours," then began to vomit and shake, she said.

Bartschi's son, the one stuck in front of a television so his mom could get high, tested positive for meth and marijuana when he was removed from her home in March 2000 after her arrest for meth.

"The only time they took [the handcuffs] off was so I could pack him a little suitcase," she said. "I couldn't say, 'I'll see you soon' because I didn't know when I'd see him. I could just say, 'Mommy loves you.'"

"He was going down the front walk looking over his shoulder. I don't ever want to see that look on my son's face again, as he's leaving with a stranger and his suitcase and his teddy bear."

Effects of meth on children have not been widely studied. But Karen Buchi, associate professor of pediatrics at the University of Utah, said recent studies show **adults'** brains are permanently changed after chronic meth use. "If it can do that to an **adult**, what is the effect on a more immature nervous system?" she said.

Children in meth homes also become used to **neglect**, paranoia and sometimes violence, Buchi said. Jorgensen estimates she found guns and pornography in some 95 percent of meth homes.

Trouble may be in the future for children of addicts, as well — those who were exposed to the drug, or to chemicals used to make it, may be predisposed to become addicts themselves.

"This is a monster. You should be preparing now for these kids," Stalcup said.

End of the Line: The final straw for Cappelli began with a strange fluttering in her stomach. A nurse acquaintance asked her if she might be pregnant.

In reality, she was in her sixth month. She had had no idea.

Cappelli confessed her drug use during pregnancy to her doctor, who alerted the Division of Child and Family Services. Her daughter, now 18 months old, was taken into state custody as a newborn. She weighed 5 pounds, 7 ounces and was severely dehydrated at birth.

Cappelli got her back after proving she had been clean for a month and attending court-ordered treatment. "The fact that she's healthy is a miracle," she said.

Bartschi also completed a treatment program in order to get her son back. "It was either drugs or my son," she said. "For me, it was very easy."

Smith nearly killed herself before she stopped using meth.

In 2000, Smith entered drug court and passed every drug test for 10 months. She was still using **meth**, but every day she ate a toxic dose of two chlorine tablets — the ones used to keep hot tubs clean — in a successful strategy for passing urine tests.

"It was like having the flu so horribly bad I couldn't move. My eyelids hurt. I felt constantly like I had to puke but I couldn't," Smith said.

Finally, she deliberately allowed herself to test positive, thinking she'd get thrown in jail for a couple of weeks — enough time to clean her system. Instead, she was ordered to a four-month Davis County Jail program.

She now works as a receptionist at a real estate company.

The women admit they're still tempted. Young recently turned down an offer to get high on a drive to Wendover.

Cappelli, who works in customer service for a car rental company, sometimes misses her circle of drug-using friends. She sees some of them occasionally - on the nightly news.

Others are in prison for crimes like aggravated kidnapping and assault with a deadly weapon. "Today, I would never even dream of letting these people in my house," she said. "The thought of it makes me cringe."

Salt Lake City Becoming an Unlikely Battlefield in the War on Drugs

Editor's note: While the *Tribune* has covered Salt Lake City's methamphetamine culture before, the following is offered as a look at how other parts of the country view Utah.

BY PAUL PRINGLE

THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

Pioneer Park was named for the in-living founders of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The neatly groomed lawn of shade trees and footpaths is six blocks from Temple Square, world headquarters of the Mormon faith.

It is also a prime location for drug rings.

"They're here if you want them," said Kathy Kennedy, 48, an addicted alcoholic and former heroin addict who has dabbled in line and methamphetamine.

Unemployed for years, she was sitting the afternoon in the park, as does most days. "There's every 1 of drug. This isn't different from any other city."

Salt Lake may be the last place you would expect to find a thriving narcotics culture. After all, the teachings of the Mormon Church, which remains Utah's dominant institution and is the wellspring of law-and-order politics, forbid coffee and cigarettes.

But the drug scourge has not spared the Utah capital, for reasons that Mormon leaders concede will be beyond the church's power of spiritual persuasion. They provide the same earthly temptations, family failings and youthful rebelliousness that bedevil any community.

"I wish we knew why these things happen," said Harold Brown, management director of the church's social services programs. "We have our share of problems. We wish we didn't." Over the past few years, au-

Drug Abuse Up in Utah

Utah is experiencing an unprecedented increase in drug abuse, as recent statistics indicate.

Utah drug arrests



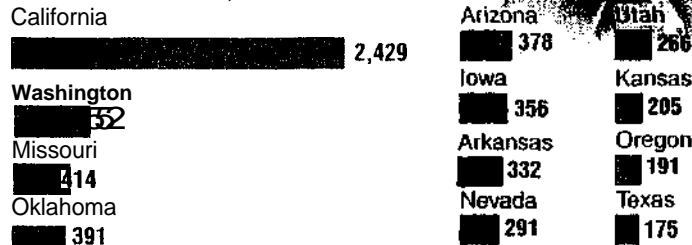
Utah drug seizures in grams

	1998	1999	2000**
Heroin	1,365	955	4,191
Marijuana	430,474	110,747	447,827
Cocaine	59,208	92,158	28,292
Meth	42,922	71,838	6,835
Club drugs*	3,034	13,586	120,827

*In doses

**Through July 9

Meth lab seizures, 1999



NOTE: Totals do not include figures from some smaller, non-reporting police agencies.

Knight-Milder Tribune

Enforcement Administration.

In the early 1990s, the DEA and local police agencies raided about a half dozen labs a year in the Beehive State. They busted 266 in 1999 — mainly in the Salt Lake region — and are on a pace to at least equal that number this year.

The typically closet-sized labs are turning up throughout the city and county, from downtown hotel rooms to suburban garages to foothill shanties along the emerald Wasatch Mountains.

Outside Salt Lake, meth makers favor the deep recesses of Utah's national forests. The state has also posted record confiscations of speed smuggled into the country

in the building's third-floor view of temple spires, the skyline's signature feature. "It was surprising."

The magnitude of the meth epidemic also surprised Lisa Jorgensen, a state children services worker assigned to the Salt Lake police. Her job is to rescue youngsters from drug-infested homes. In Salt Lake County, 65 percent of children taken from their parents by the state come from meth dens, according to the Utah Department of Human Services.

"They live in just deplorable, chronic, horrible neglect," said Jorgensen, who was hunched over a computer at the downtown police station. "We get 20 to 25 cases a

whole. Nevertheless, the Utah trend for all drugs has been troubling.

Seizures of heroin, cocaine, marijuana, ecstasy and GHB are up by substantial margins, the DEA says. Ecstasy and GHB top the list, soaring from 3,034 doses two years ago to 13,586 in 1999 and 120,827 in the first five months of this year.

"We hate to see it," said Salt Lake police Capt. Roger Winkler. "Utah has always been above this. It hits home."

Ecstasy and GHB have exploded despite a Salt Lake club scene that is virtually dormant by non-Utah standards. The Mormon influence translates into tough limits on alcohol sales. Most bars require customers to buy memberships before imbibing. And they are often restricted to serving low-alcohol beer.

But there is a sprinkling of nightspots in and around Salt Lake's hotel district, where construction is booming in anticipation of the 2002 Winter Olympics. The blue laws have done little to keep ecstasy and GHB out of the hands of young revelers.

"People can always find a connection," said Jan Hansen, a 20-year-old college student who was sipping a latte at Cup of Joe, a downtown coffeehouse.

"Lots of things are frowned on here, but people still use them," said Hansen, a Salt Lake native. He sported a silver stud in his lower lip and a pair of earrings. "I've tried 'em."

His buddy and fellow student, Garrett Smith, 21, also told of sampling ecstasy. "At my high school here, there were only 20 good Mormons," Smith said. "The rest were, like, jocks who just wanted to get stoned."

Salt Lake's drug counselors know the type. They have seen the

Lake County's drug abuse programs, considers the church a mixed blessing in her mission. Its anti-drug strictures, she says, have undoubtedly steered countless young people away from narcotics.

Then again, Hardy added, the church's preeminence may have fostered a false sense of security. Utah's population of 2.1 million is 70 percent Mormon, a Figure that has been fairly constant for four decades. About 60 percent of the Salt Lake region's 1.2 million residents belong to the church.

"It's easier here to look the other way and say the drug problem doesn't happen," said Hardy. "Denial is a wonderful thing."

Church spokesman Dale Bills sat down to discuss drugs in a paneled conference room at the Joseph Smith Memorial Building. The gem of marbled columns and stained-glass ceilings was once the Hotel Utah. It's across Main Street from Temple Square, whose six-spired worship hall is Salt Lake's tangible heart and soul.

"Our message is the same, the doctrine is the same, the principles are the same," said Bills, referring to the church's stance on drugs. "We set a high standard, but not all kids are perfect."

The church offers its own drug treatment programs, including 57 weekly group-counseling sessions in Utah. "It's sort of our take on AA," said James Goodrich, the church's welfare director for northern Utah.

Attendance is modest, however; 15 to 20 people turn out at each meeting. Brown, the Mormon social services executive, said the church has yet to see a marked upswing in demand for help.

"It has not been reported to me that we have any dramatic increases," he added. But he acknowledged that admission rolls at

lorities in the greater Salt Lake area have reported sharp increases in the trafficking of heroin; cocaine; marijuana; methamphetamine, also known as crank or speed; and so-called club drugs like Ecstasy and GHB. The proliferation of meth laboratories has been especially dramatic.

"Meth is all around," said Kennedy, who moved here from Oregon last fall. Bone thin and weary eyed, her face pitted with wrinkles, she pointed toward a distant corner framed by maples and elms. "You can buy meth right down here. You can buy anything."

Utah ranks among the top 10 states for total meth labs, and No. 1 - "speed" cookeries per capita, according to the U.S. Drug

by Mexican dealers.

"I didn't think there would be this much of a problem here. All I knew about Salt Lake City was the religion and things like that," said Keith, a Salt Lake DEA investigator who joined the federal bureau in 1998, after 15 years as a Dallas police officer. He asked that his last name be withheld because he works undercover.

The 38-year-old agent, who was wearing a Dallas Cowboys T-shirt, fought off a yawn. He had been up since 4 a.m. to kick in the door of a suspected meth lab. The target was a small house in a quiet, blue-collar neighborhood within a mile of the DEA building.

"There's a lot more meth here than in Dallas," said Keith, taking

month."

The DEA has expanded its Salt Lake staff to root out the meth labs. Federal prosecutors have also cracked down. They are zeroing in on meth peddlers who use Utah's sparsely inhabited highway corridors to ship the drug from Mexico.

Since 1996, the U.S. Attorney's Office in Salt Lake has prosecuted nearly 1,000 Mexican nationals for drug crimes, most involving meth.

"We're the crossroads of the West [for] Mexican meth," said U.S. Attorney Paul Warner.

Meth aside, Utah is not afflicted with the level of drug-related offenses found in much of the metropolitan West. Its violent crime rate is roughly 35 percent below that of Western states and the nation as a

demand for treatment spike 20 percent since the mid-1990s, driven largely by meth users under age 35. Clinic operators say that while most speed addicts are lower-income white people, the meth plague has cut across the socioeconomic spectrum.

"I don't know why we're seeing proportionately more meth here than other places," said Bruce Jacobson, director of the Cornerstone clinic near downtown. "We wonder about that ourselves."

"Obviously, we live in a more conservative area. But I can't say with any confidence or certainty what the influence of the Mormon Church is on the drug problem here."

Barbara Hardy, who heads Salt

secular clinics might paint a darker picture.

Don Mendrala, now in his fourth year as chief of the DEA's Salt Lake office, says he had envisioned a much brighter picture when he transferred here after stints in St. Louis and Chicago.

"I thought this would be a nice, quiet community," he said. His desk phone was ringing. Night had begun to fall, a busy time. "I'd been completely unaware of the problems."

The phone bleated away. Mendrala had to iron out the details of a predawn raid set for the following morning. "We want to get 'em while they're sleeping," he said.

It was another meth lab. Not far from Pioneer Park.

C.O.P. VS CLANDESTINE LABS

*Salt Lake City Methamphetamine Initiative:
Utilizing Community Oriented Policing to
Address Clandestine Labs and other
Dangerous Drug Activity*

Salt Lake City has a substantial methamphetamine problem. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) ranks Utah #2, per capita, for clandestine lab sites. A team of professionals is co-located with the Drug Abatement Response Team (DART) to address four issues related to narcotics: immediate/proper response to drug endangered children, rehabilitation and the reuniting of families, community health/safety, and public awareness/education.

Through this approach, the child "victim" receives immediate attention. Salt Lake City Police Department's (SLCPD's) approach utilizes local, state and county personnel who are dispatched to the crime scene. Youth and Family Specialists (and when necessary, Child Protection Service worker) accompany police at the crime scene to minimize the impact on children. Procedures have been implemented based on individualized cases, i.e., link with community services, seek medical attention, kinship/shelter placement and/or dependency drug court referral.

The Public Awareness Campaign consists of Public Service Announcement's (PSA's), Billboards, Direct Neighborhood Contacts, Educational Videos, Pamphlets, and a collaborative training effort initiated through the partnering agencies to public schools, landlords, utilities, social service agencies, hospitals, etc. The objective is to educate the public to the health risks/dangers that exist because of meth use/labs in their neighborhoods.

Once children and families are removed from the scene, the Health worker closes the residence to occupancy/entry. He then works

with and trains the landlord to decontaminate the property and prevent future problems.

Through our new approach we have increased the efficiency of social, judicial, and enforcement agencies in the treatment of victims and the prosecution of suspects. Agency administration and on-line workers meet monthly to develop agency protocol and legislation. Thirty plus agencies combine to make up the Partners Work Group. These agencies include: Law Enforcement, Judicial, Social Services, Prosecution, Medical,

Substance Abuse, Child Protection, Schools, Public Safety, Environmental Protection.

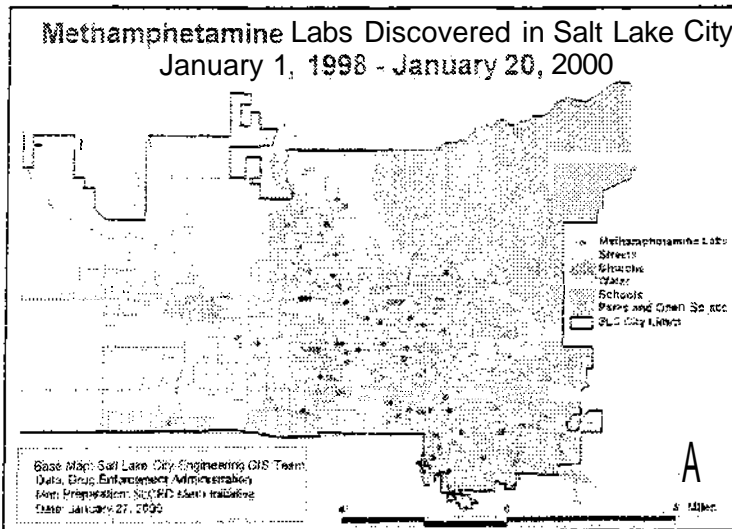
... The Public Awareness Campaign consists of PSA's, Billboards, Direct Contacts, Educational Video's, Pamphlets...

Problems the Program Addresses

Since the initiation of this project Salt Lake City has resolved 200 clandestine lab sites. This shows a substantial problem notwithstanding that Detective Jeff Payne of the DEA Metro Narcotics Task Force estimates that only one in every ten clandestine lab sites is discovered.



C.O.P. VS CLANDESTINE LABS



Children present at clandestine lab sites are exposed to chemicals, pornography, and loaded handguns. Lisa Jorgensen the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) worker assigned to the Initiative states, "These are the most neglected children I have ever seen, and we are just skimming the surface". These drug issues include child neglect and abuse, filthy homes and other neighborhood issues including contamination, increased traffic and crime.

Children and elderly present at these sites are the victims eighty percent of the time. These victims must be decontaminated and placed in protective care. Of these, 37% are testing positive for narcotics in their systems. The removal of victims from these sites places a substantial burden to the community and its service agencies.

There is a cost of approximately \$15,000 to prepare a residence for occupancy following the discovery of a contaminated site. The owner of these properties (often the victim) bears the cost of cleanup and rehab. Decontamination and discovery costs are born by the taxpayers.

The indicators of methamphetamine production continue to elude citizens and landlords due to their lack of awareness. Law enforcement will continue to respond to the problem, but understands that education and community involvement is the key to resolution.

Significant Achievements

Among the thirty partnering agencies the most significant achievement is the collaboration that

streamlines the protocols/procedures for cases. Representatives from key agencies are co-located and respond as a team. Joint decisions made by the "team" strengthen cases and bridges the gap between agencies. Further, the entire team meets regularly to set goals, problem solve and develop needed legislation.

Through this initiative the Child and Elderly Endangerment Statute was implemented, enhancing charges from misdemeanor to felony. Additionally, state legislation has been introduced to mandate timely decontamination/rehabilitation of property. Until this legislation passes, the health department continues to encourage property owners to comply with county health codes.

The intelligence office is staffed by data and intelligence analysts who answer hotline calls, taking complaints of drug related activities in neighborhoods. In 1998 the hotline processed 426 complaints. With the implementation of the Intelligence Office, 997 complaints were processed in 2000. Not only did the number of complaints increase, but also the average response time decreased from eight weeks to two weeks. Analysts now receive and prepare cases, freeing up detectives to investigate substantial cases.

This collaborative team recognizes that education/awareness is prevention. With that focus, the team has conducted 168 trainings involving 6500+ participants including social services, landlords, motel/hotel staff, hospitals, schools and child care professionals. Representatives from the collaborative team have presented at statewide and national conferences as well as conducting health and safety fairs. Additionally, a public awareness campaign has placed billboards and media ads statewide.

Beneficiaries of the Project

Children/Elderly: Children and the elderly, by living in their own homes, become victims. Through this initiative they receive immediate care and are placed in protective custody.

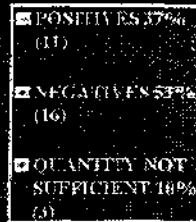
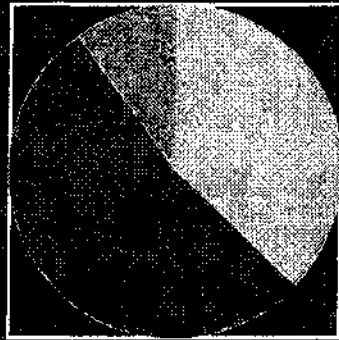
Families: Families are impacted through ongoing support of Dependency Drug Court, DCFS, Work Force Services, Guardian ad Litem and treatment providers. Offenders are given the opportunity to take responsibility for their actions, accept the support of available

C.O.P.S.'s CLANDESTINE LABS

Child Protection Team Primary Children's Medical Center

- 2/11/00 – 6/17/00
- Total of 30 children
- Hair Tests

Salt Lake City numbers are consistent with what California is finding



services and ultimately make the life changes needed to be reunited with their children/loved ones.

Citizens: Through education and the Public Awareness campaign, citizens become knowledgeable as to the indicators of clandestine meth labs in their community. Additionally, they understand the cost both financially and in terms of neighborhood safety.

Neighborhoods: Neighborhoods impacted by the presence of clandestine meth labs are decontaminated and neighbors are free to live without the fear of crime and health hazards. These neighbors receive immediate response to their concerns, gain confidence in their local authorities (collaborative team) and are reassured about their personal safety in their homes.

Replication of the Program

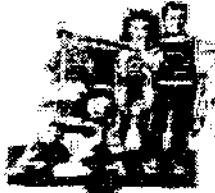
Replication of this project is already in progress. Drug Enforcement Administration, West Valley City Police Department and Salt Lake City Police Department worked in partnership to develop the pilot project. Midvale Police Department has partnered with West Valley City Police Department in implementing a Meth Initiative in their jurisdiction. The four jurisdictions are working in partnership with Salt Lake City's collaborative efforts. We view the project as

having a triangular effect on the state of Utah. The initiative was implemented in Salt Lake City and as a result, the efforts have expanded to effect such a comprehensive plan and procedures for the state. The plan includes medical procedures for potentially exposed children, child protection procedures for children exposed to a clandestine lab site, increased charges for child and elderly, a highly visible public awareness and training campaign. Decreased treatment successes, an up standard Dependency Drug Court and clean up standards.

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services in their Interim Report July 2000 published by the Institute for Law and Justice (www.oip.usdoj.gov). "This particular program is a large and dynamic cooperative relationship among agencies is seen as perhaps the biggest success".

The National Institute on Drug Addictions (NIDA) has chosen the state of Utah to conduct a longitudinal study of the effects of children exposed to that has already been implemented at COPS. Office has placed Utah and California at the forefront of successful solutions to child endangerment at clandestine lab sites.

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S.L. hopes to keep Meth Initiative going without grant

Feds quit funding the drug-fighting program in October

By Laura Hancock
Deseret News staff writer

With a little penny-pinching, Salt Lake City is hoping to breathe new life into a program to battle methamphetamine. City officials say the program is vital to the community.

Grant money for the Meth Initiative ran out at the end of October. However, city officials said the program will mostly stay intact through June 30 and perhaps even longer.

"We're looking to see how to extend it **countywide** and even statewide," said **Marjean Wood**, coordinator for the Meth Initiative.

The Meth Initiative was a grant

from the **Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)**, the Bureau of the **Justice Assistance**. In July 1999, **President Clinton** announced the pilot program.

Grants were given to seven cities — Salt Lake City, **Phoenix**, **Minneapolis**, **Oklahoma City**, **Dallas**, **Little Rock, Ark.**, and **Quincy, Ill.** — those with notoriously **high methamphetamine** production and usage rates. **West Valley City** and **Midvale** received smaller grants in September 1999.

Salt Lake City has operated its program with about \$1 million in

combined grants from **COPS**, **COPS Division of Child and Family Safety**, **Department of Health**, **Department of Labor** and others.

Jeff Thorson, communication specialist for the COPS program in **Washington, D.C.**, said states were allowed to use the money to fund programs they designed themselves.

By February 1999 in Utah, **eight** people from various local, **state** and federal agencies **had** been hired to **work** full and part time on the Meth Initiative, including **people** from the police **department**,

attorney from the Salt Lake County District Attorney's Office.

Wood said these people meet at least weekly, sometimes daily, on specific meth cases. They also look at the general challenge of preventing more people from cooking and using the **drug**.

Wood said the gathering of the agencies was new. In the **past**, it was "hit-and-miss" whether the police contacted **DCFS**, whether police contacted the health depart-

ment, whether prosecutors identified the specific cases where

But now the money is almost gone, and Wood said the future employment of some **people** who work on the Meth Initiative is in question. "But our goal is to be here longer," she said.

There has been little opposition to the Meth Initiative in Salt Lake City. And people who **work** in it believe it's **successful**.

Pat Dunn of the Drug **Enforcement Administration** said the num-

ber of **methamphetamine** seizures has gone down since 1999. But that doesn't necessarily mean the number of people using the drug has decreased, because the **DEA** believes most meth is cooked outside of Utah and smuggled in from Southern California and Mexico.

Thorson said COPS officials plan to visit each participating city and evaluate its programs in 2001. He would not say when they'll be in Salt Lake City.

E-MAIL: l Hancock@desnews.com



Over the Years, Meth Made Steady March Into Utah

Sunday,
September 2,
2001



Utah's meth troubles have been decades in the making. Until 1998, when the state limited sales of precursors such as iodine crystals, meth cooks from around the West flocked to Utah to purchase their ingredients.

"Utah has been naive about methamphetamine," said West Valley Police Lt. Charles Illsley, who specialized in meth undercover work for 19 years. "We were a magnet for cooks. We were a supplier state for 32 other states."

Although cooks use a variety of recipes to manufacture the drug, a common one, invented by a Fruit Heights man, is called the "matchbook method."

That method has three primary ingredients:

Ephedrine or pseudoephedrine -- commonly found in cold medications such as Sudafed; extracted by diluting or soaking the pills.

Red

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phosphorous -
- extracted
from
matchbook
strike strips.

Iodine
crystals -- a
corrosive
solid. The

instant iodine
is exposed to
air, it turns
into a gas,

Illsley said. "It will eat the finish off a firearm." It also corrodes the mucous membranes of anyone who inhales it, especially children.

Hydrochloric acid, sulfuric acid, acetone, ether and lye can also be used to manufacture the drug. The substances can be bought at grocery stores, gas stations, hardware stores, agricultural supply stores and even veterinary clinics.

Also known as crank, crystal, ice or speed, meth can be swallowed, snorted, smoked or injected, although injection appears to be primarily a man's method.

The meth "high" is experienced just seconds after using the drug, said Annette Fleckenstein, assistant professor of pharmacology and toxicology at the University of Utah.

Meth triggers release of dopamine, a naturally occurring brain chemical released by activities such as eating a favorite food and engaging in sex. But meth "causes a release of dopamine far, far in excess of anything that happens physiologically," Fleckenstein said. Over the long term, dopamine neurons are destroyed. Other effects on long-term users still are being studied.

In the past decade, the state's meth problem has exploded. In 1999, Utah ranked fifth in the nation per capita for meth lab busts, followed by other Western and Midwestern states. In the East, meth is not a primary problem. In 1999, for example, New York had only one meth lab bust.

Meth use cuts across socioeconomic and religious lines. Recovering addict Jill Bartschi, for example, said she had the "classic LDS raising."

Illsley said, "[Utah is] a Republican stronghold and the headquarters of the Mormon church. There has been a long view that all is well in Zion. . . . For almost 20 years, we have had a lackadaisical attitude toward meth- amphetamine."

No more. Utah authorities have been cracking

down on meth suppliers, who can face lengthy prison terms. First-time offenders can be sentenced to a just a few months in jail if they are sent to drug court treatment programs.

--Jacob Santini and Ashley Estes



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When a meth user is your mom

By Pat Reavy

Deseret News staff writer

The homes are so filthy, so contaminated by drugs that police won't enter them without donning special protective gear.

Inside, police often find more than drugs, dealers and dirt. They find children.

"People using drugs aren't concerned about housecleaning and hygiene," said Lana Taylor of the Salt Lake District Attorney's Office. "These kids are living in horrendous conditions."

But dirt isn't all there is. The children often show other signs of eating, sleeping and playing among drugs. They have drugs in their systems. And in their lives.

Earlier this month, a Syracuse fifth-grader was suspended for bringing methamphetamine to school. The 11-year-old had found it at home while making breakfast for her 2- and 9-year-old brothers. Stuck to the 2-year-old's back was a bag of methamphetamine. Police say the boy had slept with his mother the night before.

The girl's mother and boyfriend

Please see **KIDS** on A 7

KIDS

Continued from A1

were arrested. The girl and her brothers were taken into protective custody.

Police and prosecutors are taking increasing steps to address the problem of children living in drug houses. Sometimes children are taken from their homes and tested for drugs. Sometimes the homes themselves are tested. And police are exploring ways to maintain parent-child contact during rehab.

Statistics show the Syracuse case is not an isolated incident.

In 1999, 85 children were found in houses in the Salt Lake area where drugs were either being used, stored, manufactured or distributed, said Marjean Wood, project coordinator for the Salt Lake City Police Department's COPS methamphetamine initiative.

Thirty-nine of those children were taken into protective custody.

In 2000, 122 children were found in drug houses, and 40 were taken into state custody. In 2001, 62 Salt Lake children were found in drug houses, and 20 were taken into protective custody, Wood said.

Many of those children tested positive for drugs.

Primary Children's Medical Center tested 63 drug-house children in 2000. Twenty-four of them tested positive for drugs in their systems, Wood said. In 2001, 43 of 88 children tested positive. For the first three months of 2002, about 15 children were tested and 11 came back positive for drugs.

In one case, a child taken from a house was turning blue and having trouble breathing, Wood said. Doctors found both cocaine and heroin in his system.

Most of the children tested

are younger than 10, and most of those are between 3 to 6 years old, Wood said. Methamphetamine, cocaine, opiates and Valium are among the drugs found in their systems. Usually the children test positive for a combination of drugs, she said.

Lawmakers addressed the issue in 2000 with child-endangerment laws enhancing the penalties for adult drug users who have children in their houses.

West Valley police took their drug-house investigations a step further. Using an ion scanner, they can detect drug residue on baby bottles, toys and even the bedsheets where an infant sleeps.

After all the investigations, however, life has to go on. Utah officials are trying to figure out how to help that happen.

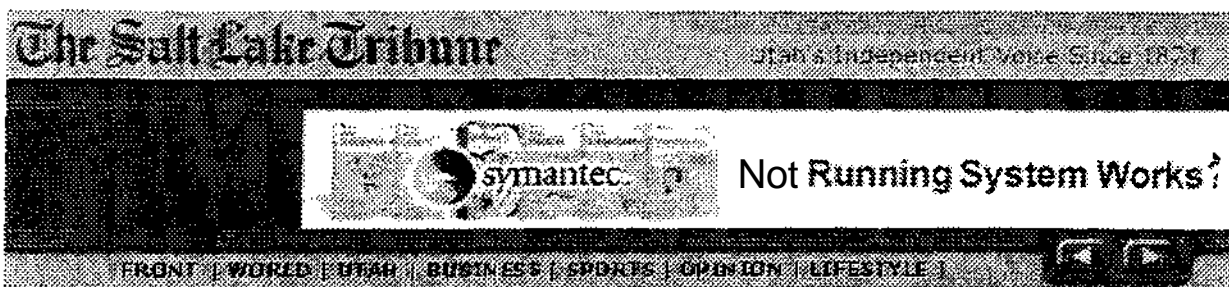
Last week, Utah law-enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges attended the U.S. Department of Justice's annual COPS Methamphetamine Conference in Las Vegas. One of the programs the Utah contingent talked about was an open-treatment facility that allows children found in drug houses to continue to see their mothers while mom undergoes rehab.

The idea is to preserve those crucial bonding years for mother and child, Wood said. But at the same time the child needs a safe environment.

"We can't afford to take care of every single kid in our community who has been exposed to drugs. We don't have the funds to put them all in foster homes, and it's not necessarily the best thing to do," Wood said.

The first of these facilities is scheduled to open July 1 in Salt Lake City. If it is successful, three others are already in the planning stages.

E-MAIL: preavy@desnews.com



Agencies Join to Attack Abuse, Drug Cycle

Thursday, October
3, 2002

BY JACOB SANTINI
THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE



OGDEN — The effects of drug abuse too often travel from generation to generation, creating a cycle leading to child abuse and neglect, which in turn can lead back to drugs. Utah's Department of Human Services wants to break the pattern.

To address that goal, the department announced Wednesday it is creating a link between its two divisions that specialize in those areas. The Division of Child and Family Services and the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health plan to team up in hopes of curbing the intergenerational cycle of drug and child abuse. The announcement was made at a substance abuse conference in Ogden.

DCFS officials report that between 60 percent and 70 percent of the children in foster care come from homes in which their parents abused drugs or alcohol.

The collaborative effort will aim to offer services to the drug-addicted mothers and their abused children at the same time, said Robin Arnold-Williams, the executive director of the Department of Human Services.

Those services are highlighted by protecting children while getting drug users, primarily mothers addicted to methamphetamine, treatment. In 2000, 29 percent of the women booked into the Salt Lake County Jail tested positive for methamphetamine, one of the highest rates in the country, according to a federal report.

Collaborative approaches to the problem are gaining strength nationwide. The federal government recently awarded a five-year grant to form the National Center for Substance Abuse and Child Welfare.

Nancy Young, director of the Irvine, Calif.-based Children and Family Futures Inc., in Ogden for the conference, said agencies have to go beyond thinking "collaborating is coming to each other's meetings."

The first glimpse of collaboration in Utah may be in Salt Lake County. The divisions plan to request federal grants to open a residential treatment facility for mothers addicted to meth. The dependent children of those mothers also would live at the home.

Not only is the mother treated for her addiction, but DCFS workers would be able to provide services and treatment for

children who may have been abused. But experts warned the collaboration between the divisions will fail if drug-addicted women fear their children will be taken by the state because they ask for help battling their addiction.

Another roadblock to collaboration in the past: confidentiality rules that prevent therapists from telling child welfare workers about a person's treatment or history of abuse.

The divisions are working on those issues, officials said.



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Utah News

Wednesday, March 5, 2003



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Rescuing kids of drug addicts

By Sheryl Worsley

KSL Newsradio 1160

A trail winds through several feet of garbage. The stench of human waste permeates the air. There's no running water. No working toilets. In homes like this narcotics officers find the smallest victims of the drug trade: the children of addicted parents.

Statistics kept by the Salt Lake Police Department show 52 percent of the children taken from homes where methamphetamine is being produced test positive for narcotics.

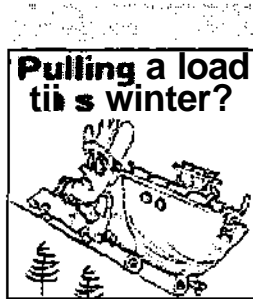
And those children are often traumatized when police officers, guns drawn, come into their homes and arrest their parents.

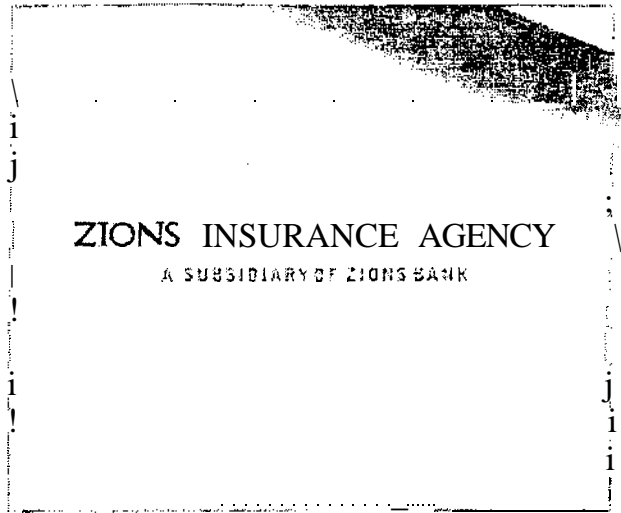
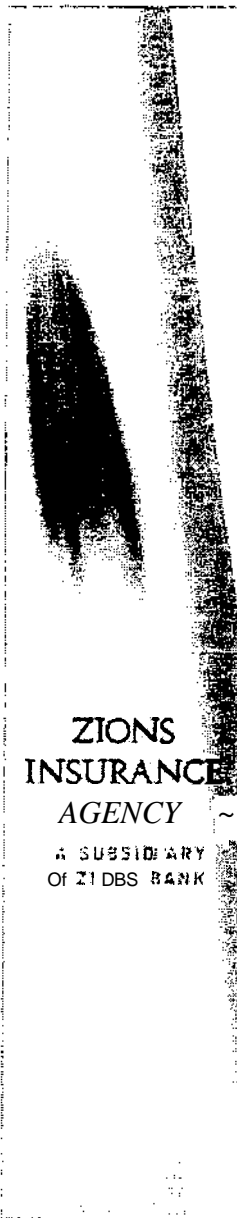
"They're terrified, screaming, crying," says Salt Lake Police Sgt. Michael Ross. "On the last home where I served a warrant, one little boy asked, 'Are you going to take my father to jail again?' You're taking away the most important person in their life."

Ross says 80 percent of the warrants he serves involve children. And many, he says, are not only exposed to drugs but are facing neglect. "They're obviously not fed very well," he said. "There's no food in the refrigerator. Our first priority is to get these kids treated medically."

Dr. Karen Buchi sees children from homes like these every week at the South Main clinic. "Often it's the first time these kids have ever seen a doctor," she said.

Buchi said in one home officers found an ingredient to make methamphetamine in the refrigerator next to some chicken. "They actually tested the chicken, and it tested positive for meth,"





she said.

Buchi said that drugs cause brain damage and are linked to prolonged developmental and behavioral problems. But what doctors don't know is **how much of that** is caused by neglect and exposure to this environment. "There are loaded guns lying around the house because the parents are paranoid," she said. "Their mind-set is on their next fix. Not

the nurturing of their children or making sure they're eating well or being tended."

Salt Lake deputy district attorney Lana Taylor said officers test kitchen tables, cribs and diaper bags. "The surface is testing positive for numerous drugs," she said.

But the damage is beyond drug exposure.

"These children are also the victims of physical and sexual abuse," Taylor said. "You'll find pornography hung up on the walls in children's bedrooms. It's pervasive."

Taylor said older children and teens in these homes are not only becoming addicts themselves. They're also learning how to cook meth and prepare other drugs as well.

"Kids are bringing bongos to school for show and tell. They're learning the criminal behavior," said officer Marjean Searcy, head of a newly formed task force on drug-endangered children.

Searcy's team last year helped 170 children from these homes. And with \$300,000 in federal money this year and interest from other cities like West Valley City, Searcy hopes that number will grow. "We're at last addressing the real victims of drug abuse," she said. "Hopefully long term we'll see fewer kids in these environments."

Ross says he'll continue to beat down front doors. "Even though dragging away their parents is very difficult, we know the kids will be better in the long run," he said. "It's their only chance at a better life."

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Agencies Step In to Help Child Victims of Meth

BY JACOB SANTINI
The Salt Lake Tribune

The rise of **methamphetamine** labs in Utah did more than catch the attention of police and prosecutors.

Those labs put a bright light on the endangerment of children being poisoned as their parents mixed explosive materials to cook the highly addictive drug.

Today, labs are dwindling in Utah. The number of children living in danger because they are exposed to drugs is not

"We have thousands and thousands of kids in drug homes that we're overlooking," said Sue Webber-Brown, a detective from Butte County, Calif., who helped create the nation's first program to attack the meth epidemic with multiple agencies. "They're living next door. They're our kids' best friends."

Helping such children was a main topic of the Endangered Children Conference in Salt Lake City, sponsored by the Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health. The conference, which included sessions for police, social workers, health care workers and court employees from 14 states, ended Friday.

The number of meth labs found in Utah dropped by more than half between 1999, when 272 labs were **discovered**, and 2002, with 132 labs. Officials are quick to point out that meth is still prevalent in Utah as Mexican cartels traffick the drug.

"Even if we shut down the labs, **methamphetamine** is not going to go away," said Richard

"We have thousands and thousands of Tads in drug homes that we're overlooking."

SUE WEBBER-BROWN
California detective

McKelvie, an assistant U.S. attorney for the state.

That also means children will continue to live around **meth-coated** pipes and needles. But the safety of children's homes goes beyond methamphetamine.

Richard Anderson, the director of Utah's Division of Child and Family Services, said the agency needs to be involved in any case in which parents are abusing substances, such as the parent who is caught **driving** drunk with children in the car.

"We've moved from a society that didn't believe these things happen to children in their own homes," Anderson said. "Now, with child endangerment you don't have to hit your child or refuse to feed your child. If **you** put them in a dangerous **environment**, you are responsible."

In 2000, state lawmakers gave prosecutors the ability to charge parents with a second-degree felony, punishable by 15 years in prison, for endangering their children with drugs.

Prosecutors in Salt Lake County have used the statute 262 times, said Lana Taylor, a Salt Lake County deputy **attorney**.

Long-Term Cost of Meth Includes Brain Damage

Complete rewiring: Experts say successful treatment must address neurological changes

BY MATT CANHAM
The Salt Lake Tribune

The heart pumps faster. The need to sleep disappears and food is forgotten. Anxiety and paranoia creep in, but get pushed aside; by an uncontrollable wave of energy and excitement.

When methamphetamine takes control of a user, everything evaporates but the desire to remain high.

"It became my downfall and my best friend all at the same time," said Melissa Tinsley, 40, from North Ogden, who is battling her 12-year meth

addiction.

Mike Johnson, 39, of Salt Lake City, also talks almost fondly of the drug he started snorting 16 years ago.

"The instant up you could achieve from it, man, I was hooked after one time," Johnson said. "Meth made you feel like you had 25 hours in the day."

But researchers are finding that when long-term meth addicts like Tinsley and Johnson decide to end the years of abuse, they must battle not only the continuing lure of addiction but the obstacle of brain damage.

Research is increasingly indicating heavy meth use may lead to a complete rewiring of the brain, leaving the addict depressed and forgetful, with a tendency to make poor decisions and

See **MEH** 12



FRANCISCO KUOLSETH/*The Salt Lake Tribune*

Mike Johnson credits the staff at Salt Lake City's First Step Mouse with helping him fight two decades of drug addiction. He has been clean for a year and a half.

Meth Can Rewire Brain, Experts Say

● Continued from D1

have a short temper.

Meth and related drugs are the only widely used illicit substances that damage the brain for years, if not permanently.

"I'm more worried about meth than any other drug out there," said Kelly Lundberg, a psychiatrist at the University of Utah who specializes in addiction.

Meth is the drug of choice among Utahns in treatment programs, according to 2002 statistics recently released by the state. A little more than 18 percent say they used the drug, which far exceeds the national rate of 4 percent.

Meth releases large amounts of neurotransmitters, mainly dopamine but also serotonin. These natural chemicals are vital in brain functions that control mood, memory, sleep, movement, decision making and appetite.

The drug leaves the user feeling euphoric and full of energy at first, but if an addict takes meth multiple times a week for a period of three to five years,

the neurons that release these chemicals become damaged, according to Glen Hanson, acting director of the National Institute of Drug Abuse.

Hanson is also a professor at the U., who with the help of his research partner, Jim Gibb, has investigated the physical effects of meth abuse for years.

Their research has found that heavy meth users lose about 50 percent of their ability to produce dopamine. "It doesn't seem to come back," he said.

Hanson and Gibb's results have been duplicated by researchers at UCLA, among others, and these scientists have observed that the damage remains at least four years in animals.

People with meth-induced brain damage are constantly irritable, lose their appetite, have insomnia, forget complex memories, can not stay still and almost never feel joy. They may also experience shaking hands similar to symptoms of Parkinson's disease, since extreme dopamine depletion leads to that disabling disease.

Johnson complains about forgetting much of his childhood and Tinsley says she feels a constant sense of anxiety, both problems that stem from depleted dopamine.

Researchers want addicts like Johnson and Tinsley to know that if they remain clean, they can regain control of their lives, but the symptoms of brain damage may never dissipate.

Treatment centers need to take this into account, Hanson said.

"How do we get them around what they did to their brain? How do we train them to go out and get a job after they damaged their executive functions?" he asks.

Lundberg says the answer remains in a mixture of patience, persistence and continuing research. Treatment cannot change an addict's permanent disabilities, but it can explain it to the addicts and provide tips to cope.

Counselors address both physical symptoms — the extreme fatigue, depression, malnutrition, and dental problems common to addicts — and the emotional reasons people abuse drugs.

Tinsley first tried meth when a co-worker at an elderly care facility offered it to her. She was in her late 20s supporting four children and working two jobs.

"The more energy the better. It sounds insane but that was my thought process," she said.

She had previously dabbled in marijuana and occasionally drank a beer. She almost immediately became a daily meth user.

"I loved my children, but I continuously chose dope over them," she said.

Tinsley lost her children, her job and her home. She became a dealer to support her own habit until she decided to get help in 2001, when she enrolled herself in the Bridge Program, an

outpatient treatment facility in Ogden.

She relapsed after six months, and credits her 18-year-old son for sending her back to the Bridge Program months later. "He brought me a rose and he said, 'Mom, we forgive you,'" she said.

The average user in Utah is a woman in her late 20s or early 30s, often with children. State statistics indicate that 30.5 percent of women in treatment abused alcohol, followed closely by meth at 28.3 percent; 13.5 percent of men in treatment used meth.

Johnson did not make the choice to get counseling. He was ordered by the court to enroll in the First Step House, an inpatient facility that counsels about 60 drug abusers in Salt Lake City.

Johnson has abused drugs since he was 14 and once worked as the collector for his dealer. He has a history of domestic violence, and served his most recent jail sentence for beating his live-in girlfriend after she caught him smoking meth with their neighbors in 2001.

Johnson has spent the last three months in the First Step House and is convinced that he has finally beaten the habit that has consumed his life, though he knows he is far from having a stable existence.

"I took a lot of years to mess my life up," he said. "It is not going to get better overnight."

Early treatment involves identifying the personal issues that led to drug abuse. Johnson spends two-hour each

Drug-Endangered Children

• Law enforcement, medical personnel and drug counselors will gather for the first Drug Endangered Children Conference today and Friday at the Sheraton City Centre Hotel in Salt Lake City. Panel discussions and speeches will focus on how methamphetamine abuse affects the home, families and especially children.

day in a support group, where **members** discuss their past experiences.

Programs also help addicts learn the skills necessary to function in society, through lessons on how to balance a check book, what makes a **successful** relationship and how to find a job.

Tinsley says these classes are **help**ing her more than any other part of her out-patient treatment. She has **learned** how to make a resume and plans to **start** a job soon. She wants to remain **em**-ployed, become self-sufficient and support her children.

Johnson plans to hone his social skills, be a decent father and manage **his** own general contracting business. **Both** plan to return to college.

Tinsley and Johnson credit their respective treatment centers for **helping** them remain clean for so long, but **many** in their position do not get help. Only **25** percent of the nearly 90,000 **drug** abusers in Utah receive treatment due to a lack of funding from state and private resources.

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