

MONTANA METH PROJECT

Montana Meth Project Unveils New Media Campaign

Renowned Cinematographer Wally Pfister Directs Television Ads that Encourage Teens to Speak Up and Help Prevent Meth Use

BILLINGS, Mont.—Jan. 13, 2010—The Montana Meth Project today unveiled its latest advertising campaign, which includes four new television ads, as well as radio, print, and outdoor advertisements that will run throughout the state. The television spots were directed by three-time Academy Award-nominated cinematographer Wally Pfister, renowned for his work on *The Dark Knight*—the third-largest-grossing film in U.S. history—as well as the films *Memento*, *Batman Begins*, and *The Prestige*.

The campaign is based on extensive quantitative and qualitative research with teens, both in Montana and throughout the nation. In particular, it reflects the changing attitudes Montana teens have toward methamphetamine, which remains a threat even as more young people say they understand the dangers of the drug. The advertisements are designed to show teens that they can help keep their friends away from Meth by speaking up at the critical moment when an individual is thinking about trying it. The television spots depict teens reflecting on the devastating consequences that resulted from a choice to do nothing when they could have prevented a friend from using Meth.

“Every year the *Montana Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* has shown that more and more young people in Montana disapprove of Meth use and would give their friends a hard time for trying the drug,” said Montana Meth Project Chairman Mike Gullede. “This new campaign encourages teens to turn that disapproval into action, and shows them the active role they can play in preventing Meth use in our state.”

The new wave of advertising is the fifth in a series of ground-breaking campaigns the Meth Project has launched in Montana, which have included work by renowned filmmakers such as Darren Aronofsky and Oscar-nominated director and producer Alejandro González Iñárritu. Wally Pfister directed the new television ads through his Log Angeles-based production company Independent Media. Pfister is one of Hollywood’s most acclaimed cinematographers, as well as an award-winning director and director of photography for a number of national advertising campaigns. One of his first features, which premiered at Sundance, was filmed entirely on location in Montana.

“I am honored to be a part of the Meth Project and the amazing work it has done to prevent Meth use,” Pfister said. “As the father of teenagers myself, I understand how important it is to educate young people about the dangers of Meth, and show them how they can take action when they need to. I believe these spots will be empowering for teens, and help them understand the difference an individual can make.”

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The new advertisements were unveiled at events held at local schools in Billings and Helena. Students created posters and banners in anticipation of the premiere of the new campaign, and their work is on display at Lewis and Clark Middle School in Billings, and Capital High School in Helena. Linda McCulloch, Montana Secretary of State and former Director of the Office of Public Instruction, spoke to students, community leaders, and local officials at the Helena event, and Montana Meth Project Chairman Mike Gullede, who is publisher of the *Billings Gazette* and vice president of Lee Enterprises, hosted the event in Billings.

McCulloch said the new campaign will empower teens to take action. “The new advertisements will continue to drive home the powerful message—‘Not Even Once’—that has dramatically changed attitudes and behaviors in Montana, and they will let teens know that they can make a difference,” McCulloch said. “We know Montana’s teens are strong supporters of the Montana Meth Project. Harnessing their commitment and energy, which we saw vividly in last year’s March Against Meth, will make a crucial difference in our prevention efforts.”

Mike Ruppert, CEO of Boyd Andrews Community Services—one of the state’s premier treatment facilities—and president of the Montana Addiction Service Providers, praised the new ads and cited the importance of a continued focus on prevention. “The state of Montana spends more than \$6 million per year on treatment services for methamphetamine addicts, not to mention the untold social and emotional costs to our communities and our families,” Ruppert said. “Since the Montana Meth Project launched, we have seen teen Meth use decline by 63% and adult Meth use has decreased by more than 72%. We need to continue to focus on both prevention and treatment if we are to win the fight against methamphetamine in Montana.”

According to the Montana Attorney General’s office, while the financial impact of Meth use on the state has declined by \$100 million annually since the launch of the Montana Meth Project, Meth use still costs Montana approximately \$200 million per year, including resources spent on the criminal justice, healthcare and social service systems. Although domestic production in large-scale Meth labs has decreased, that decrease has been offset by increasing availability of methamphetamine trafficked by Mexican and Asian networks. According to the most recent *Montana Meth Use & Attitudes Survey*, 30% of teens said Meth was somewhat easy to get.

The new advertising campaign launches statewide to complement the Montana Meth Project’s community action programs throughout the state. The ads can be viewed at www.montanameth.org/ads.

Following the launch of the Montana Meth Project in 2005, seven additional states have implemented the Meth Project prevention program: Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, and Wyoming. For more information, visit www.methproject.org.

About the Montana Meth Project

Launched in September 2005, the Montana Meth Project, a not-for-profit organization headquartered in Missoula, Montana, implements a range of advertising and community action programs aimed at reducing methamphetamine use in the state. Combining extensive research with a hard-hitting, integrated media campaign, it has been repeatedly cited as an effective response to a devastating social problem. For more information, visit www.montanameth.org.

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