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## Anti-meth effort comes to Wyo

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A methamphetamine prevention program that has been recognized nationally for its success in Montana is coming to Wyoming.

The Wyoming Meth Project will use the same marketing strategies and tools used by its neighbor to the north, said Trudi McMurry, director of the McMurry Foundation, which took the lead in bringing together donors for the Wyoming project with the Montana businessman who conceived the program.

"We are actually taking the exact same information that Montana uses and using it in Wyoming," McMurry said Tuesday.

The effort is in its initial stage. The Wyoming project still need to hire an executive director and put together an advisory board.

McMurry did say that a group of private donors is working together to fund the initial year of the project.

Tom Siebel, founder of the Montana Meth Project, told officials in Washington, D.C., Tuesday that eight foundations have chipped in for an annual budget of \$1.5 million for the Wyoming effort. In Montana, the program was privately funded for two years but is now funded in equal thirds by the federal government, the state and private sources.

"We just have decided that the meth problem is so widespread in Wyoming that we need to do something to fight the initial use of it," McMurry said.

The Montana program features an ongoing marketing campaign, along with community outreach and public policy initiatives, that "realistically and graphically communicate the risk of methamphetamine to the youth of Montana," according to the project's Web site.

Since the project began in 2005, methamphetamine use among Montana teenagers has dropped by 45 percent, according to the site. In a January 2007 report, the state's attorney general said the Montana Meth Project's education campaign, combined with other prevention and enforcement efforts, has had "dramatically positive results."

In January, Siebel, a Montana businessman and rancher, met with Wyoming legislators and private donors, McMurry said.

It's too soon to say when the campaign will begin in Wyoming, she added.

Some indicators -- including the number of meth arrests and the number of addicts seeking treatment -- show use of the drug has declined in Wyoming. However, at the state's annual methamphetamine and substance abuse conference in January, law enforcement officials warned the problem is far from solved.

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