

Country Roads & City Streets

WV Local Technical Assistance PROGRAM

Fall 2006

College of Engineering & Mineral Resources

Vol. 21 No. 3

METHAMPHETAMINE WASTE: A DANGER FOR ROAD WORKERS

The task of keeping our roadsides clean through litter pickup, mowing, and ditching, is part of the regular maintenance routine for many roadway employees. As part of these normal activities, roadway employees may discover hazardous waste dumps resulting from illegal methamphetamine labs.

What is Methamphetamine?

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) describes methamphetamine as “a powerfully addictive stimulant that dramatically affects many areas of the central nervous system. The drug can easily be made in clandestine laboratories from relatively inexpensive over-the-counter ingredients and can be purchased at a relatively low cost. These factors make methamphetamine a drug with a high potential for widespread abuse.”

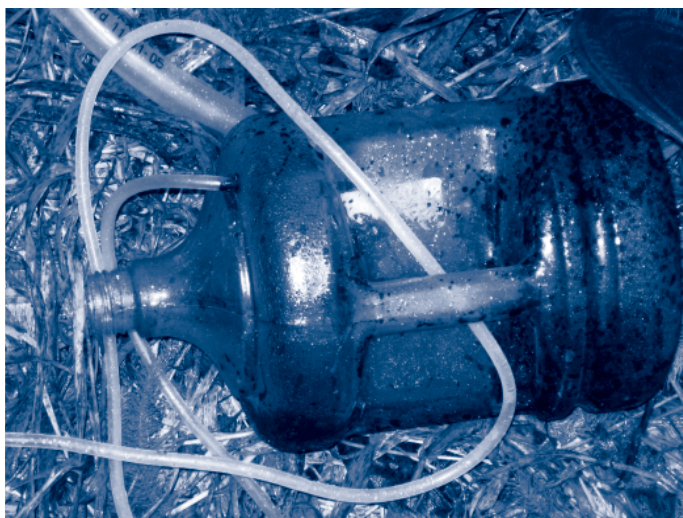
Methamphetamine is often referred to as “speed,” “meth,” and “chalk.” In its smoked form it is often referred to as “ice,” “crystal,” “crank,” and “glass.” Meth comes in many forms and

can be smoked, snorted, injected or orally ingested. It is a white, odorless, bitter tasting crystalline powder that can be easily dissolved in water or alcohol.

Are Meth Labs a Problem in WV?

According to the United States Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) website, the seizure of clandestine methamphetamine laboratories has increased dramatically since 2001. During the 2005 calendar year, a total of 213 methamphetamine labs, up from 17 labs in 2001, were seized in West Virginia by law enforcement officials. The increase in the number of labs and the wastes produced are an important reminder that roadway

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*Waste dump from an illegal methamphetamine lab.
Photo courtesy of the Central Iowa Drug Task Force.*

 West Virginia University.



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Country Roads and City

Streets is a quarterly publication of the West Virginia Local Technical Assistance Program (WV LTAP). The purpose of this newsletter is to provide information that is beneficial to roadway construction and maintenance personnel.

The material and opinions contained in this newsletter are those of the West Virginia Local Technical Assistance Program and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Federal Highway Administration or the WV Department of Transportation. Material contained in *Country Roads and City Streets* is a combination of original and borrowed material. Every effort has been made to ensure the integrity and accuracy of this material. However, the West Virginia LTAP does not assume responsibility for any incorrect material.



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workers need to have a heightened awareness of their work area and be on the lookout for lab waste dumps.

*** Dangerous Meth Materials**

For every meth lab found, several other labs may exist that are not discovered.

Manufacturing one pound of meth generates six pounds of toxic waste. The waste is often dumped in isolated rural areas, road ditches, and fields. It is extremely dangerous, even lethal, and requires special handling by trained hazardous materials personnel.

The waste materials are highly flammable, explosive, and/or corrosive. Disturbing them often re-starts chemical reactions that can cause sudden explosions.

Coming in contact with these materials can cause headache, nausea, dizziness, or skin or eye irritation. Inhaling the fumes can cause acute lung damage. An unexpected explosion can result in severe chemical burns.

The materials themselves are bad enough. In addition, meth manufacturers have been known to booby-trap meth labs and waste dumps.

*** Road Workers Need to Be Alert**

Like hunters and Adopt-a-Highway volunteers, road workers are among those likely to stumble upon a meth waste dump.

- Be alert. What may initially look like harmless trash in a ditch may be lethal meth waste material.

- Do not go near the material(s).

- Do not touch or move anything in the area. In addition to being dangerous to yourself, disturbing the area may hinder law enforcement agencies' efforts to trace the lab location and/or the manufacturers.

- Contact your supervisor immediately. Your supervisor should contact law enforcement personnel with the exact location of the possible meth waste dump.

Included on the following page are additional resources about meth labs and meth waste. Please take a few minutes to review these materials, as they provide information that can help keep you safe as you perform your roadway maintenance tasks.

**Information used with the permission of the Iowa LTAP, originally published in Technology News, May - June 2006.*

What To Do If You Encounter a Clandestine Methamphetamine Laboratory

- DO NOT touch anything in the lab.
- DO NOT turn on any electrical power switches or light switches.
- DO NOT turn off any electrical power switches or light switches.
- DO NOT eat or drink in or around a lab.
- DO NOT open or move containers with chemicals or suspected chemicals.
- DO NOT smoke anywhere near a lab.
- DO NOT sniff any containers.
- DO decontaminate yourself and your clothing.
- DO wash your hands and face thoroughly.
- DO call your local authorities or DEA district office

*Information in this box from the
US Drug Enforcement Administration Website www.dea.gov*

METH WASTE: WHAT TO WATCH FOR

There are several methods for manufacturing methamphetamine. Each method involves slightly different materials and equipment that may be dumped. *Be suspicious if you come across the following:*

- Anything that could be used as a waste receptacle: a plastic bag, backpack, duffel bag, cooler, even the trunk of a car
- A patch of dead grass or dying vegetation, which could signal the presence of polluting materials
- A strong smell of cat urine, rotten eggs, or ammonia

COMBINATION OF ANY OF THESE ITEMS:

- Empty blister packs or boxes of cold or allergy pills containing ephedrine or PSE (Sudafed®, Contact® Non-Drowsy, or generic versions of these)
- Aluminum Foil
- Blenders
- Buckets
- Butane Torches
- Cheesecloth, Coffee Filters, Funnels
- Duct Tape, Clamps
- Gas Cans
- Glass Jars, Flasks, Bottles, Dishes
- Hot Plates or Camp Stoves
- Paper Towels
- Plastic Cartons
- Propane, Portable Propane Tanks
- Rubber Gloves
- Rubber or Plastic Tubing
- Strainers
- Syringes
- Thermometers
- Thermoses

ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CHEMICALS:

- Acetone
- Anhydrous Ammonia
- Car Batteries
- Cat Litter (May be in a bag or container with a plastic hose, called a "Death Bag")
- Charcoal Lighter Fluid
- Denatured Alcohol
- Drain Cleaner (Sulfuric Acid)
- Epsom Salt or Table Salt
- Freon
- HEET Gasoline Additive
- Iodine
- Isopropyl or Rubbing Alcohol
- Kerosene
- Lacquer
- Lithium Batteries
- Match Books With Washed-Off Striker Strips
- Matches for Red Phosphorus
- Mineral Spirits
- Muriatic Acid
- Paint Thinner (Toluene)
- Red Devil Lye
- Starting Fluid (Ether)
- Trichloroethane (A Common Gun-Cleaning Solvent)

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

METH LAB WASTE RECOGNITION FOR ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY VOLUNTEERS

The Colorado DOT has produced a 10-minute video titled *Meth Lab Waste Recognition for Adopt-a-Highway Volunteers*.

It is a very informative video that not only benefits Adopt-a-Highway volunteers but also state and local roadway workers. This video is available for loan through the WV LTAP library. Please call or email Brad at 304-293-3031 x 2662, bradley.dicola@mail.wvu.edu.

U.S. DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION WEBSITE WWW.DEA.GOV

The DEA website contains statistics and facts for each state regarding not only methamphetamine but other popular illegal drugs. Several publications are available for free download as well.

WV DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION WWW.WVDEP.ORG

The WV Department of Environmental Protection has both general and WV specific information regarding methamphetamines. Visit the following link: <http://www.state.wv.us/swmb/MethLabHP.htm>

WEST VIRGINIA EXTENSION SERVICE PROGRAM HELPS CREATE SYNERGY IN COMMUNITIES!

By: Alison Hanham, First Impressions Program Director

Over the years, WV LTAP staff have had the opportunity to work with other West Virginia University programs in delivering professional hands-on technical assistance. The Community Design Team and First Impressions are two outreach and service programs that allow our staff the opportunity to help communities improve surface transportation issues.

The WV LTAP is pleased to highlight the First Impressions program and help increase awareness of how your WV community could benefit from this program. We look forward to continuing this important work with our University partners, and we encourage you to learn more about the resources available to help enhance your community.

Most people enjoy getting out and visiting interesting and different places. After you've visited a place you always have an opinion about how it looked, how it could be improved, what you'll remember most about it, or what you liked and might want to try to develop in your own town. These ideas form the basis of



a very successful program called First Impressions at West Virginia University's Extension Service-Center for Community, Economic, and Workforce Development. The program (adapted from similar programs at the University of Wisconsin and Kansas State University) is designed to help communities raise local awareness about what their community looks like to a first-time visitor. The visitors provide valuable information about how newcomers see the community – both the positive and the negative traits – and what can be done to improve and develop the community. First Impressions has been marketed as a first step for towns that are just beginning to gear up their community development efforts. Communities have used the findings to help rejuvenate their image to outsiders and in the process, have not only become more attractive places to live and work but also have created the synergy needed for

continued community development.

The program is very simple. Volunteer visitors arrive unannounced in the community and pose as prospective business owners or retirees, shoppers, or potential residents. They explore residential, retail, and industrial areas, schools, local government offices, and the Chamber of Commerce by driving and walking around the town. Visitors focus on aspects such as community aesthetics and appearance, access to services, and the friendliness of the local people. Each member is equipped with a disposable camera to document their impressions. Their observations, comments, photos, and recommendations are compiled in a summary report which is presented

back to the community.

Forty-seven communities have participated in the First Impressions program to date, involving over 200 volunteer visitors. Direct program

Direct program impacts have included beautification and clean-up projects, downtown revitalization and restoration projects, improved signage and planning, tourism development projects, improved traffic patterns, and infrastructure development.

impacts have included beautification and clean-up projects, downtown revitalization and restoration projects, improved signage and planning, tourism development projects, improved traffic patterns, and infrastructure development. Participating communities have expressed their satisfaction with the program, indicating that the recommendations made by the





visitors were logical and reasonable and in many cases initiated positive changes. When asked about the most beneficial aspects of the program, communities responded that the positive, unbiased opinions and perspectives of the visitors and the constructive criticism and recommendations made by the visitors were extremely useful. Participating communities also indicated the program was an excellent first step in the community development process and credited the program for getting “everyone talking and thinking” and “initiating follow-up meetings.” Most importantly, visitors indicated that as a result of First Impressions, the community started working together.

The First Impressions Program also has a positive impact on the volunteer visitors who participate in the program. Volunteer visitors have overwhelmingly indicated the program is well designed to assist them in their community visits.



They valued the program for two distinct reasons. First, they appreciated the opportunity to serve as volunteers for the program and secondly, the program had a big impact on visitor’s perspectives on community development. Visitors often mentioned that the experience prompted them to look at their own municipalities and communities in a more critical way. Volunteers have made the following comments:

It’s a very do-able and positive way to feel that you’re having an impact on regional economic development.

I have a better understanding of the importance of long-term community planning.

Visiting other areas helps sharpen your vision of your own community and it deepens my understanding of how my discipline(s) and skills can be applied better in my own town.

To sign up for the program or more information, visit the First Impressions web site at <http://www.wvu.edu/%7Eexten/depts/cwd/crd/firstimp.htm> or contact: Alison Hanham, First Impressions Program Director at 304-293-6131, ext. 4207, Email: ACHanham@mail.wvu.edu.

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COUNTRY ROADS, TAKE ME HOME...SAFELY

A forum to improve safety on two-lane rural roads

FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

The West Virginia LTAP Center is a part of the nationwide Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP), which is funded by the Federal Highway Administration. The program also receives funding from the West Virginia Department of Transportation.

Mission:

The mission of the West Virginia LTAP is to foster a safe, efficient, and environmentally sound surface transportation system by improving skills and increasing knowledge of the transportation workforce and decision makers.

Overall Goal:

The Center's overall goal is to improve the transportation system by focusing on professional training, technical assistance, and information dissemination.

To achieve this goal, the WV LTAP does the following:

- Provides on-site training and demonstrations
- Publishes a quarterly newsletter
- Maintains a video, CD-Rom, and publications library
- Provides technical assistance via mail, telephone, fax, email, or site visits.

WV LTAP recently hosted Country Roads Take Me Home...Safely, a two-lane rural road safety forum, in Martinsburg, WV. This event was held September 6-7, 2006 as part of the Federal Highway Mid-Atlantic Safety Team's annual rotating series designed to inform safety professionals and decision makers and to raise awareness about improving roadways. Ninety attendees from West Virginia, surrounding states, and as far away as California attended.

During the course of the event, participants attended pre-forum workshops, plenary, and break out sessions. Frank Julian, Atlanta FHWA Resource Center, presented a guardrail installation workshop; Mark Hood, PA LTAP, informed participants about how to develop a roadway safety improvement plan for local governments; and Dean Larsen, Baltimore FHWA Resource Center, presented a condensed, half-day version of his Low-Cost Safety Improvements Workshop on Wednesday morning during the Pre-Forum Workshop sessions.

Forum breakout sessions included topics such as road safety assessments, roadside safety, the importance of clear roadsides and delineation, the impact of maintenance practices on the safety of rural roadways, and innovative technologies available to improve safety on rural roadways.

At the conclusion of the forum, participants were asked to list one thing they learned that they could put into practice in the next month. Some of the responses to this question included conducting road safety audits, using lane-miles to develop H3R crash rates in identifying high crash locations, and using low-cost techniques in improving road safety.

The WV LTAP staff enjoyed helping coordinate and host this conference and hope that all who attended gained additional knowledge to help make our two-lane rural roads safer.



Cathy Satterfield of FHWA-WV Division assists Ron Lipps, MD State Highway Administration, with his closing session presentation.



Randy Sigley (L) and Tim Kirk (R) take a moment to smile for the camera during the morning break.



MIKE BLANKENSHIP BIDS FAREWELL TO WV LTAP

By: Weslie Boyd

After 15 years with WV LTAP, Mike Blankenship is now employed as a consultant to the Arizona Department of Transportation as Arizona's Road Safety Audit Program Manager. He says his new position is very similar to the role he had in the West Virginia Safety Circuit Rider program. He will travel the state to work with city, county, and state highway agencies to improve roadway safety.

From 1991-August, 2006, Mike served as the WV LTAP Program Manager. He coordinated and instructed most of the Roads Scholar Courses. He also provided technical assistance to many West Virginia communities. Mike felt the most rewarding part of his job was his ability to help people. "It is a great feeling when someone from a Community Design Team visit or a technical assist visit calls and tells you how helpful your assistance was," he said.

Mike served as the region three representative to the National LTAP Association from 2001-2004. He also served as president of the Association from 2003-2004.

Reflecting on his career in West Virginia, Mike said he will miss the people the most. He will miss the people he works with, the people he trains, the LTAP Advisory Board,



One of Mike's favorite parts of the job was seeing and learning about projects firsthand and helping educate others.

and the people from other LTAP centers. "All of these individuals are passionate about improving the roads and improving communities," he said. "Our Advisory Board is one of the best—the individuals are truly committed."

Mike currently resides in Avondale, AZ with his wife and three of his children. His new home is located almost within walking distance to the new Glendale Stadium where the College Football Championship game will occur January 8, 2007. He laughed, "Look me up when you're in town with the Mountaineers."

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CHANGES AT THE WV LTAP

Change. Just the mere thought of change evokes many different reactions. Without change though, we would never progress and never reach our full potential, either as individuals or group members.

The WV LTAP has always tried to openly welcome change, whether in deciding to change our program name and logo, or in deciding what courses and other training opportunities to bring to you. Currently, we are experiencing one of the biggest changes to our program to date. After fifteen years with LTAP, Mike Blankenship has vacated his professional engineering position at

the WV LTAP to begin a contractual position with the Arizona DOT.

While we are finalizing the job description for the professional engineering position, it will be a couple of months until a new full-time staff member is on board. Because of our current limited staff resources, we decided not to host the annual one-day Snow and Ice Control Workshop, usually held in September at Jackson's Mill. We fully intend to host this important workshop next fall. Once we hire our new full-time staff member, one of our primary goals is to have this individual back on the road offering Roads Scholar I

and Roads Scholar II courses.

Change. Lots of changes are taking place, and we are excited and a little anxious about what the future brings. We are committed to strengthening our program and providing quality training and technical assistance.

Please feel free to contact either Kim or Ron at 304-293-3031 x 2612 or 2627 if you have any questions during this transition period, or if you have ideas on how we can serve you better.



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Change Service Requested

Another important change for you to note is a change of date for the annual Roadway Management Conference.

For those of you who are familiar with this event, you know that it is usually held in March. However, because of changes in the VA LTAP program, the 2007 conference is scheduled to be held in the fall of the year, sometime in September. The RMC is scheduled to be held in Charlottesville, VA.

We will pass along additional details as soon as they become available.

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