

2004 Thurston County Methamphetamine Coalition Report



An abandoned home, that had been used as a meth lab, is burned in the town of Bucoda.

Spring 2005

Our Mission

“We value our diverse communities and recognize their health and safety is threatened by the epidemic of methamphetamine. In response, we band together to fight the epidemic by creating a comprehensive, measurable program of law and justice, treatment, cleanup and prevention. We will accomplish this mission through a wide-ranging effort involving the entire Thurston County community.”

Coalition Members

Elected Officials

Cathy Wolfe, Thurston County Commissioner
Gary Alexander, State Representative 20th District
Kelly Love, Congressman Brian Baird's Office
Vickie Larkin, Thurston County Commissioner's Office

Environmental/Cleanup

Carolyn Comeau, WA State Department of Health
Civilia Winslow-Hill, WA State Department of Health
Eric Heinitz, WA State Department of Ecology
Gerald Tousley, Thurston County Public Health & Social Services

(Chair)

Linda Puryear, WA State Department of Ecology
Nanette Brooks, WA State Department of Ecology
Ron Holcomb, WA State Department of Ecology
Sharon Kophs, WA State Community, Trade and Economic
Development

Law Enforcement

Brad Watkins, Thurston County Sheriff's Office
Camille Dexter, WA State Department of Corrections
Chris Mealy, Thurston County Sheriff's Office
John Price, Thurston County Sheriff's Office
Chris Wickham, Thurston County Family Court
Colby Karlson, WA State Department of Corrections
Dan Kimball, Thurston County Sheriff's Office
Dee Koester, Thurston County Prosecuting Attorney's Office
Ed Holm, Thurston County Prosecuting Attorney
Ellen Goodman, Thurston County Superior Court
Ettore Castellente, East Olympia Fire District Six
Fred Bjornberg, Thurston County Sheriff's Office **(Chair)**
Gary Edwards, Thurston County Sheriff
Gary Michel, City of Olympia Police Chief
Jamie Kambich, DSHS, Child Protective Services
Jane Futterman, Thurston County Prosecuting Attorney's Office

Janice Barnes, Thurston County Juvenile Probation
Joice Hagen, WA State Department of Corrections
Loreli Thompson, Thurston County Narcotics Task Force
Neil McClanahan, Thurston County Undersheriff
Pamala Cordis, WA State Department of Corrections
Phil Comstock, City of Lacey Police
Richard Jordan, WA State Department of Corrections
Shanna Church, Thurston County Superior Court
Shawn Ball, Thurston County Sheriff's Office
Sheila Kirby, Thurston County Prosecuting Attorney's Office
Steve Nelson, City of Olympia Police
Tom Zweiger, Washington State Patrol
Wayne Graham, Thurston County Prosecuting Attorney's Office

Prevention/Outreach

Brenda Ross, TOGETHER!
Jim Anderson, Superintendent, Rochester Public Schools
John Tennis, Thurston County Public Information Program Manager
(Chair)
Kathy Raettig, TOGETHER!
Lance Larson, Safeway
Linda Clark, Rochester Weed & Seed
Mary Segawa, TOGETHER!
Patricia Coloma, TOGETHER!
Tony Kim, WA State Liquor Control Board

Treatment

Bev Peterson, Crisis Clinic
Bruce Wood, DSHS
Carl Flowers, BHR Recovery Services
Carlos Arroyo, Skokomish Tribe
Cynthia Santiago, Thurston County Public Health & Social Services
Deb Santella, Thurston County Public Health & Social Services
Diana Yu, MD, Thurston County Public Health & Social Services
Donna Bosworth, Thurston County Public Health & Social Services
Erik Landaas, Thurston County Public Health & Social Services
(Chair)
Hollie Christiancy, Providence St. Peter Chemical Dependency Center

James Koch, Providence St. Peter Chemical Dependency Center
Jason Kilmer, PhD, Addictive Behavior Specialist, Evergreen State
College
Jeff Threatt, DSHS
Ken Patis, Child Protective Services
Kristen West, CHOICE Regional Health Network
Pawnee Brown, Thurston County Public Health & Social Services
Sabrina Craig, Providence St. Peter Chemical Dependency Center
Sherri McDonald, Thurston County Public Health & Social Services
Shirley Toner, Department of Recovery Services
Tina Gehrig, Thurston County Public Health & Social Services

Other Community Members

Bill Washington, Emerald Point Apartments
Brenda Griffin
Cliff Moore, Washington State University Thurston County Extension
Denise Walker
Jennifer Myrick
Leannea Magnus, Chehalis Tribe
Linda Leblanc
Lis Merten, National Association of Chain Drug Stores
Mark Johnson, Retail Association
Rick Machado
Ross Wigney

Thurston County Methamphetamine Coalition

The epidemic of methamphetamine threatens the health and safety of the community and has been a scourge for Thurston County since the mid-1990s. In response, the Thurston County Methamphetamine Coalition was formed in 2001. The Coalition is an interjurisdictional, interdisciplinary organization created to fight the challenges that

erupt from the manufacture, sale and abuse of methamphetamine. For those not familiar with meth, it is a highly addictive, illegal, central nervous system stimulant made from household chemicals. The creation of the drug leaves behind toxic materials, which are often dumped in the environment. They can ruin plants, soil, ground and surface water and cause homes, RVs, sheds and vehicles to become unusable. Meth is highly addictive and can leave long-term users unemployable, paranoid and violent. Children in meth lab homes are often neglected and sometimes abused. The arrival of meth in a community signals an upswing in other types of crime including assault, robbery, burglary, financial crimes and more. In Thurston County there has been an obvious increase in such crimes as cooks and users become violent and also need money to manufacture and buy meth.

Since it's formation, the Coalition has pushed a four-part agenda to-

- Reduce the crime associated with methamphetamine.
- Assist those who need treatment for meth addiction.
- Inform the community regarding meth and all it's impacts and work to prevent it's use.
- Expedite the clean up of meth labs and meth dump sites.

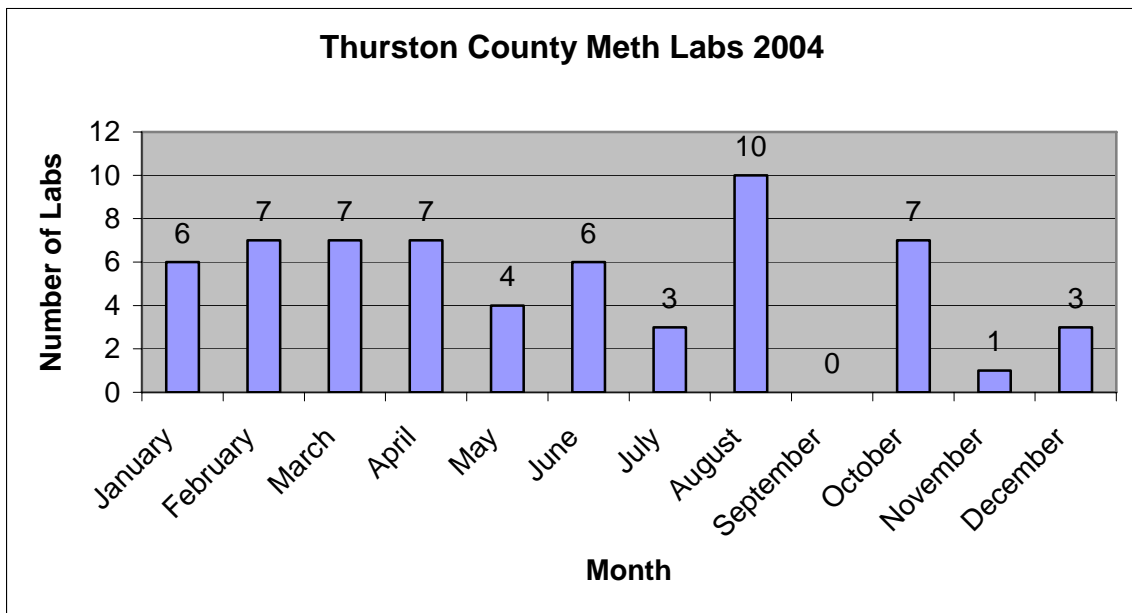
In order to accomplish these tasks, the coalition has four very active sub-committees- Law Enforcement, Treatment, Outreach and Prevention and Environmental Cleanup. This report outlines the work done by those sub-committees in 2004.

Law Enforcement.

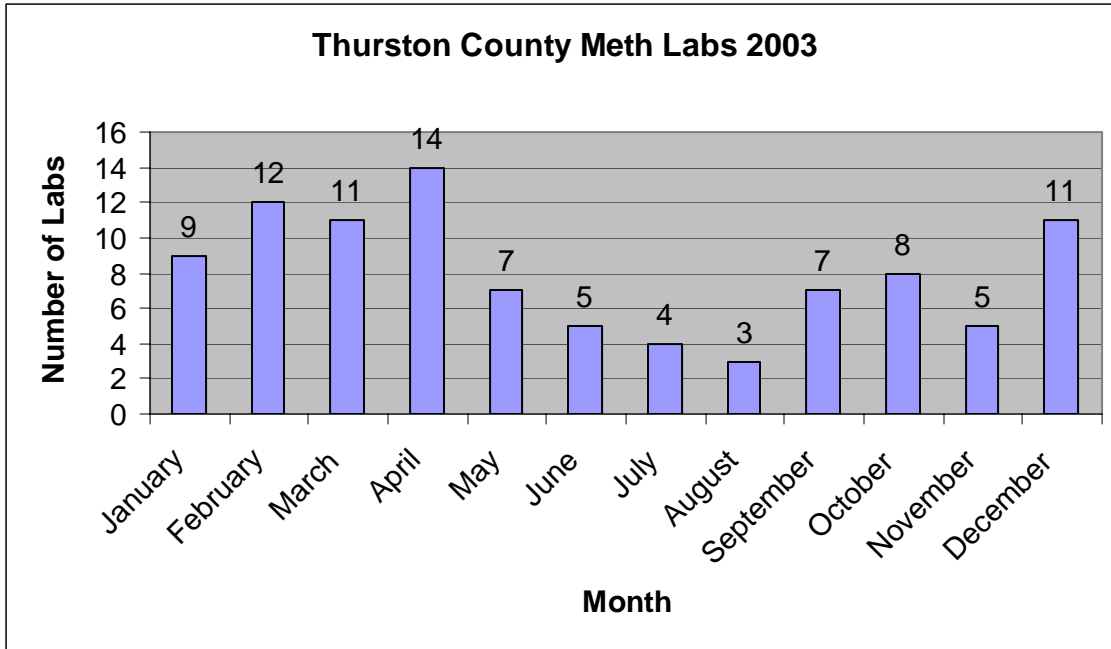
As one might imagine, the activities of law enforcement to shut down so called "mom and pop" labs continue to be a high priority for the Thurston County Methamphetamine Coalition. It takes major

cooperation between and among various agencies to accomplish that mission. Key players in the 2004 effort were the Thurston County Sheriff's Office Special Enforcement Team, The Thurston County Narcotics Task Force (TNT), The Prosecutor's Office, the Courts, The Police Departments in the cities and towns of Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, Yelm, Tenino, Rainier and other agencies.

The number of labs continued to decline in 2004 after a high of 151 in 2001. For 2004 a total of 61 methamphetamine labs and dumpsites were found in Thurston County. As you can see from the charts below, that compares to a total of 96 sites in 2003. That year was a decline from 115 in 2002. (It should be pointed out that these figures are from the State Department of Ecology which oversees disposal of toxic wastes from labs and dumpsites and may, or may not, match figures from law enforcement agencies.)



There were a total of 61 labs and dumpsites in Thurston County in 2004



For 2003, the total number of labs and dumpsites in Thurston County was 115.

The Sheriff's Office's Special Enforcement Team continued to work community tips and other investigations to shut down labs in 2004. The team was involved in 41 meth lab cases in Thurston County, which is the same number dealt with in the previous year. The team helped the Narcotics Task Force and other agencies with undercover investigations, some of which involved methamphetamine that had been manufactured outside of the county and brought into the area for distribution. This seems to be an increasing trend; to bring the meth up from California or Mexico. Another trend, noticed in 2004, is increasing sales of a more refined meth that resembles crystals and not the brown or yellow powder that had been more prevalent in years past.



"Ice" or "Crystal" meth.

The Special Enforcement Team was involved in various other drug and alcohol enforcement activities in 2004 including 14 cases with the Drug Task Force. They also assisted the state Department of Corrections with offender violations and arrests. For 2004 the team was involved in-

- Investigation of 733 tips.
- 20 marijuana grows.

- 446 felony arrests and 99 misdemeanor arrests.
- 146 warrant arrests.
- 33 domestic violence arrests.

All of the figures presented are comparable with SET team activities for 2003.

The Thurston County Narcotics Task Force (TNT) was also busy in 2004. The task force is an interjurisdictional law enforcement group designed to investigate various drug cases in Thurston County. For 2004 the TNT made more than 100 arrests, served 95 warrants and referred 54 cases to the Thurston County Prosecutor's Office. Drug related seizures were significant for the TNT in 2004.

Marijuana (Plants)	1,935
Cocaine (Ounces)	534
Heroin (Ounces)	2,858
Methamphetamine (Ounces)	1,506
Cash	\$102,944
Guns	179

In addition to the seizures of drugs, money and guns, there were several incidents where minor children were found at the scene of a bust. The TNT (and the SET team) continues to work with State Child Protective Services to obtain an analysis of children found in drug homes. The children are evaluated for signs of abuse and/or neglect. They are then placed with appropriate family members or in foster homes for follow up care.

Drug and alcohol use figured prominently in juvenile criminal cases in 2004. According to Thurston County Juvenile Probation, the caseload size at the end of the year was about 460. Of those cases, direct drug and/or alcohol charges (including minor in possession, possession of marijuana, delivery, felony possession, possession of drug paraphernalia, etc) involved 84 juveniles or about 18% of the overall caseload. Thirty-three of the 84 drug and alcohol charges were combined with other types of offenses. It is estimated that at least 70% of youth sentenced by Juvenile Court report some level of

drug and/or alcohol use. Of the youth with substance related charges 72% were male and 28% female. There is a trend toward higher percentage of female offenders (relative to males) in both Thurston County and statewide. However, the overall numbers of arrests, convictions and other crime indicators for youthful offenders are on a downward trend over the last 10 years for both males and females.

Treatment-

In an effort to cut down on the number of meth addicts, the Drug Court program continues to provide court-supervised, comprehensive treatment services to eligible adult felony drug and property offenders in Thurston County. During 2004, the success of the program surpassed the success of the previous years since the inception of drug court in the spring of 1998.

Since the beginning of the program the Prosecutor's Office has screened a total of 2,148 defendants. Only 1,864 defendants were found to be eligible. Of those, 576 defendants said they wanted to enter the Drug Court program and 419 individuals were found to be suitable. From the total number of defendants who entered the program, 184 graduated, 167 were terminated and the remaining 68 were still active in the program at the end of 2004.

Drug Court's success has also resulted in huge financial savings for Thurston County and the State. The financial savings of \$1,495,845.96 to the County and the State thus far do not reflect the number of participants who got off of welfare and became employed full-time, the children who were returned to their parent(s), the decrease in the defendant need to access medical care, and the payment of fines, child support and other debts.

Treatment of methamphetamine addicts and other substance abusers continues to be a challenge of space and finances. Locating enough bed space for in-patient treatment is difficult. Likewise, finding funds to pay for treatment for those who cannot afford care is nearly impossible.

**DASA-TA
Count of Treatment
Admissions**

Outpatient Admissions

*Month of Admission between
January 2004 and December 2004
By Gender and
Primary Substance*

As you can see from the chart, admissions for outpatient treatment for various drug abuse problems was significant in Thurston County in 2004. More than 1,300

	Male	Female	Total
	N	N	N
Primary Substance			
Alcohol	321	189	510
Cocaine	18	20	38
Heroin	33	23	56
Methamphetamine	138	183	321
Marijuana	253	124	377
Other	19	34	53
Total	782	573	1355

persons sought assistance with significant drug problems. Of those, 321 indicated their biggest challenge was abuse of methamphetamine. However, alcohol (510) and marijuana (377) were also listed prominently as a drug of choice.

It's interesting to note that more men than women sought outpatient treatment assistance for all types of substance abuse problems in 2004. However, when you look at methamphetamine in particular, 183 women sought help. That compares to 138 men who listed meth as their primary drug. Meth truly is an "equal opportunity" scourge-affecting women as often, or more often, than men.

Outreach and Prevention-

Efforts to inform the community about the impacts from methamphetamine (and other drugs) continued in earnest in 2004. Among the major initiatives was creation of a video for the training of

retail clerks and managers and the hosting of a community forum on meth related financial crimes like identification theft and fraud.



One of several MethWatch trainings given in Thurston County in 2004.

The 18-minute retail training video has become a key part of MethWatch training in Thurston and Mason counties. The video instructs viewers about the behaviors of meth cooks and tweekers in the retail environment, what meth-ingredient products they may want to buy or steal and how clerks can safely assist law enforcement. With help from the State Liquor Control Board and KOAM TV, the video was translated into Korean and presentations were made to Korean merchants from the two county area.

A community forum on meth-related fraud was held in February. Like most communities who have been hit with meth, Thurston County has seen a significant upswing in financial crimes. The forum was an opportunity for law enforcement officers to explain the different kinds of financial crime including forgery and identity theft.

They also provided practical tips for folks to use to avoid becoming victims of such crime. In addition, members of other law enforcement agencies were on hand to talk about meth and meth labs and representatives of the treatment community were also at the forum. The event was standing room only and attracted a lot of interest from news media, which were also invited.



Thurston County Sheriff's Deputy Jim Dunn is interviewed regarding meth-related fraud.

Also in 2004, the Methamphetamine Outreach Committee continued to work to provide information for first responders who have to deal with meth and its impacts. Nationally known child endangerment specialist Susan Webber Brown was brought to town in May. Along with Law Enforcement representatives and others, she told those attending the daylong conference what to look for in drug homes. Attendees learned what signs might indicate a drug lab in a home, what problems children face in such a home and how to document abuse and neglect.

Thurston County's meth-related website (<http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/meth/>) continues to be a valuable resource in getting the word out about meth, treatment, lab cleanup and other information and resources. In 2004 the website had more than 37,000 "hits". Thurston County's Meth Plan was downloaded from the site more than 575 times and the 2003 report was downloaded more than 260 times. In addition, e-mails and phone calls received from site visitors indicate their appreciation for the ease of obtaining meth-related information and resources from the web. Incidental reports seem to confirm that relatives and friends of those who are caught by the methmonster are looking for anything that will help them understand the draw of the drug and what is happening to the person who has become addicted.

The Meth Outreach Committee continues to work closely with the anti-drug abuse/anti-violence organization TOGETHER! in reaching out to the community. TOGETHER has sponsored various activities including "Project Alert" in the North Thurston School District, presentations to parents regarding teen parties, collaborative work with Community Youth Services and more. TOGETHER has also been a partner in giving away thousands of pencils, magnets, stickers and keychains containing information regarding the MethMonster web site and treatment resources.

Environmental Cleanup-

With the reduction in the number of meth labs found in Thurston County comes a corresponding reduction in the need for cleanup of meth labs and dumpsites. However it remains a significant challenge and some labs from years earlier are still not cleaned up, requiring continued monitoring and sometimes court action.

In one particularly sad case from 2004, a property owner agreed to have an abandoned home burned down as a way to ensure cleanup of all meth chemicals and to make sure the house would not be used as a lab again. When law enforcement received the tip that the house was being used to cook meth, they discovered that the elderly

owner's son and stepson were cooking the drug. When officers went to a separate house where she was living nearby, they found the cooks had also set up labs in the upstairs of that home; areas she could not reach because of physical ailments. With assistance from law enforcement and Thurston County Environmental Health, she was able to return to her home after cleanup was accomplished and her abandoned home was burned to the ground and used as practice for the Bucoda Fire Department.



Fire destroys a meth lab home in the town of Bucoda.

Meth cooks in Thurston County in 2004 continued to set up labs in almost any type of structure or vehicle you can think of-

- Vehicles include a 1971 Dodge Motor Home, a travel trailer, and a 1969 Chevy station wagon.
- Homes; including more than a dozen houses which were left in various states of disrepair due to meth lab use. County Environmental Health officials were working with owners on restoration and clearance for use. In one case in 2004, a

- mobile home that had been tagged as unusable due to meth residue simply disappeared and could not be found.
- Hotels- at least one hotel unit had to be cleaned up after use in meth manufacture.
 - Sheds- Several outbuildings have been used for the manufacture of meth in recent years and the trend continued in 2004. In one case the property owner simply destroyed a shed that had been used by cooks, unfortunately without approval from Environmental Health.

At least one homeowner faces potential court action due to failure to cleanup a former meth lab.

A new program, developed in 2004, may provide some relief for property owners who are having difficulty finding the funds for meth lab cleanup. The State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) was awarded a \$3.0M grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency in 2003 for hazardous waste and petroleum-contaminated site cleanups. As part of the 2002 Brownfields Revitalization Act, meth labs were included as hazardous waste, making the monies available for meth cleanups. The CTED money may not be used for contamination assessment; however, most counties are receiving assessment funding through Ecology. CTED and Ecology work closely together on eligible projects.

The monies may be used as a loan to a private party or to a municipality that has custody of the property and can manage or perform the cleanup, thereby making the property ready for reuse. The reuse may include sale of the property to a private developer, or, in the case of business property such as a motel or storage unit, put the property back into productive use. The reuse should have an economic development purpose -- returning tax dollars to the local municipality. So far, there has been no use of this new funding in Thurston County.

Work Planned for 2005-06

The Thurston County Methamphetamine Coalition has several goals for 2005-06 including-

- A training for landlords and property managers is to be held in March at St. Martin's College.
- Work with state lawmakers and retailers to seek further restrictions on the open sale of ephedrine-based medications.
- Increased attendance and participation at Coalition and committee meetings.
- Work to increase penalties for manufacturing meth.
- Provide increased and more comprehensive treatment options in the community.
- Increase education for the community regarding meth and other drugs.
- Improve community interest & involvement in related issues.
- Increase outreach to underrepresented groups including the Hispanic community and Indian Tribes.
- Increase intercounty & statewide cooperation.
- More collaboration among non-profits to solve community problems.

In addition to the above-listed activities, the Coalition pledges to continue programs already established under the original Thurston County Methamphetamine Plan. Those programs include the work of Law Enforcement, Treatment agencies, Outreach and Prevention and Environmental Cleanup.

**Methamphetamine Information and Resources at the
MethMonster web site.**

http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/meth/meth_home.htm

**Methamphetamine Information Hotline
360-586-2800**

**Information and referrals 24 hours a day, 7 days a week,
courtesy of the Thurston/Mason Crisis Clinic.**