

New look



The newly completed sign for The Goodland Daily News was hoisted into position today by Richard Westfahl and Jim Bowker, who work for the paper. The sign was painted by The Hot Brush of Bird City. Photo by Tom Betz / The Goodland Daily News

The drug methamphetamine can affect the nervous system

Methamphetamine is 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.

Sometimes referred to as "speed," "meth" and "chalk," in its smoked form it is often called "ice," "crystal," "crank," "fire" and glass."

The drug is available in many forms and can be smoked, snorted, injected, or orally ingested.

It's a white, odorless, bitter tasting crystalline powder that can be easily dissolved in water or alcohol.

Traditionally associated with white, male, blue-collar workers, methamphetamine is now reportedly being used by diverse groups in all regions of the country.

Use is increasing among men who have sex with men and are drug users, making this population more vulnerable to contracting and spreading sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS.

Young adults who attend "raves" or private clubs are increasingly using methamphetamine.

Notable increases are occurring among homeless and runaway youth, male and female commercial sex workers who also trade sex for drugs, and among members of gangs.

Also, people in occupations that demand long hours, mental alertness, and physical endurance, (such as



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long-haul truckers) have been using this drug at increased rates.

There is merging evidence that methamphetamine is being administered increasingly via the intravenous route.

Injecting this drug puts the user at increased risk for engaging in behaviors (both sexual and non-sexual) that could increase his or her chance of contracting HIV/AIDS, hepatitis and other infectious diseases.

Methamphetamine is not usually sold and bought on the streets like many other known illicit drugs.

Users report that they obtain their supplies of methamphetamine from friends and acquaintances.

It is typically a more closed or hidden sale, prearranged by "networking" with those producing the drug.

Often it is sold "by invitation only" at all night warehouse parties or "raves."

Because methamphetamine can be made with readily available inexpensive materials, there is great variation in the processes and chemicals used.

This means that the final product that is sold as "methamphetamine" may not be methamphetamine at all, but rather a highly altered chemical mixture with some stimulant-like effects.

Uncertainties about the drug's

sources and the pharmacological agents used in its production make it especially difficult to determine its toxicity, and resulting consequences and symptoms.

Methamphetamine is often used in dangerous combination with other substances, including cocaine or crack, marijuana, heroin, and alcohol.

Long reported as the dominant drug problem in the San Diego area, methamphetamine has become a substantial drug problem in other sections of the West and Southwest as well.

The drug has now been reported in both rural and urban areas in the East, but not to the extent seen in other regions of the country.

Meth users can be identified by signs of agitation, excited speech, decreased appetites and increased physical activity levels.

Other common symptoms include dilated pupils, high blood pressure, irregular heart beat, chest pain, shortness of breath, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea and elevated body temperature.

Occasionally they will have episodes of sudden violent behavior, intense paranoia, visual and auditory hallucinations and bouts of insomnia.

They will also have a tendency to compulsively clean and groom and repetitively sort and disassemble objects, such as cars or other mechanical devices.

Kansas farmers plant more winter wheat than the rest of the nation

WICHITA (AP) — Kansas farmers are growing more winter wheat this year at a time when the rest of the nation has planted the smallest acreage of wheat in three decades.

Wheat seedings in Kansas are up 1 percent from a year ago to 9.9 million

acres, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported Thursday.

But with this week's snow melt giving Kansas farmers their first good look at their fields, many farmers fear much of the Kansas crop has sustained heavy freeze damage dur-

ing the frigid December temperatures.

"The USDA acreage estimates are probably pretty accurate ... but how much of that will be harvested will be the big question," said Dean Stoskopf, a Hoisington wheat

grower.

Wheat plantings in Kansas — the nation's largest wheat producer — usually stay fairly static while production elsewhere in the nation fluctuates, said Brett Myers, executive vice president of the Kansas Association of Wheat

Growers.

"In Kansas, we are still the wheat state and it is hard to get that out of people's minds. We grow wheat," Myers said.

Although wheat acreage was up slightly for the 2001 crop, this is the

second year in a row Kansas planted fewer than 10 million acres into wheat. Last year, the state raised 9.8 million acres.

That compares with 1995, when Kansas farmers put in 11.8 million acres of wheat.

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