

Sampson County Meth Taskforce
1st Annual Meeting Minutes
February 24, 2010

The Sampson County Meth Task Force met on February 24, 2010, at Sampson Community College in the Occupational Room #140.

Present: J.W. Simmons; Sarah Bradshaw; Eric Pope; Jeff Shipp; Becky Jackson; Pat Green; Teresa Underwood; Jim Brinkley; Jimmy Thornton; and Janet Rosenberger.

Welcome: Sarah Bradshaw opened the meeting and turned it over to David Chestnutt for the invocation. Sarah then introduced Mr. Jefferson Strickland who gave the opening remarks. Mr. Strickland thanked the Meth Task Force for all their hard work since the Board of Commissioners signed a resolution of support for them in November 2004.

President's Remarks: J.W. Simmons, Board of Directors President informed the attendee's that a small group had come together in the beginning in 2003 with law enforcement to discuss the issues related to drugs in the community. One thing led to another and more people became involved in the endeavor and the Sampson County Meth Task Force was formed. Star Telephone became involved and has supported the group from the inception assisting financially with many things one of which is informative flyers that have been shared through the schools. They also assisted with getting our website up and operating.

Since the Meth Task Force became incorporated, South River Electric Membership Corporation has awarded us with a grant. This has helped us to expand and enabled us to have community events and most recently radio spots.

We are following policy of our By-Laws now by having our First Annual Meth Task Force Meeting today.

Treasurer's Report: Pat Green reported that our balance as of today is \$4,528.60. We will have an expense of \$750.00 come out for supplies recently purchased. Sarah Bradshaw made a motion to receive the report which was seconded by Jeff Shipp with complete support by the Board.

Nominating Committee Report & Business: Jeff Shipp reported that a nominating committee consisting of Wanda Robinson, Sarah Bradshaw and him had recently met. A decision was made to keep the Board of Director officers the same for this year. A motion was made by Eric Pope to support this decision, seconded by Becky Jackson with complete support by the Board.

Minutes: The January 20, 2010 minutes were approved with a motion from Pat Green, seconded by Jeff Shipp with complete support by the Board.

Old Business: Short presentations were given by each of the following Meth Task Force Board Members:

- Becky Jackson explained that the School Initiatives for drug education are geared toward the Middle Schools. Substance Abuse Screening Saves Youth (SASSY) was devised by the Meth Task Force and funded by a grant through Eastpointe. SASSY furnishes drug testing kits upon a parents' request which serves as a deterrent for drug abuse by students. They have almost depleted all their kits but, they have a shelf life and all the remaining kits will expire April 2010. They are presently in need of funds to stock more kits but, Eastpointe no longer has a grant available.

- Eric Pope informed the group that Law Enforcement Initiatives include conducting educational presentations to the public, wherever they'll let them. They want to reach citizens and teach them how to look out for meth labs in their area and what to do if they see suspicious activity. This awareness has prompted citizens to call law enforcement more resulting in labs being shut down. They don't care if all the calls result in any finds as long as people are keeping their eyes open to their surroundings and making an effort to help.

The State Attorney is working toward new laws which would set the length of incarceration for repeat offenders to be no less than 10 years time served.

- Teresa Underwood spoke about the Environmental Issues connected to meth labs. In 2005, the General Assembly set forth statutes governing what's required when a meth house is discovered. They've made property owners liable and responsible for whatever has gone on in homes they own. When a meth lab is discovered, the SBI will notify the Health Department and Environmental Health and they in turn must inform the owner. They send a letter informing them what is required for cleaning up the property. Everything in the house is affected: Ventilation and heat systems, carpet, appliances and even plumbing. There is no enforcement component and only half of the owners will respond to their letters. Environmental Health keeps a file and notes on each case regarding the clean up. They also share their information with realtors about affected property. The only cost to their department is for staff involvement. Eric Pope added that the initial cleanup cost is picked up by HASMAT due to following protocol requirements.
- Faith Based Initiatives were shared by David Chestnutt. He has spoken in over 60 churches and stated that pastors are not taught in seminary about drug abuse and how to handle it. David gets numerous calls from families needing help on how to deal with a drug addicted family member. He presently operates *Open Door Ministries* located in Magnolia. This is a half-way house for men. It's a 45-day program and they can house 12 at a time. The program is doing very well. Their referrals come mostly from other states and counties.
- JW Simmons ended the presentation with Intervention Initiatives in our area. We now have a monthly radio program. There's a walk-in clinic in Clinton now which also takes referrals. We are utilizing teens on local radio spots about drugs and drinking.

New Business: JW informed the group about our upcoming objectives for the new year.

❖ Action Items:

- Our Early Intervention Efforts: The Meth Task Force would like to assist in funding the purchase of drug test kits needed by the schools. No action was taken at this time.
- Grant Opportunities: We have been contacted by Andy Sturdy, Meth Task Force member, who has offered to assist the Board in writing a grant application to SAMHSA. There was a motion made by Eric Pope that we support this effort, seconded by Sarah Bradshaw with complete support by the Board. It was decided that the Executive Committee should have a called meeting with Andy to work on the application.

❖ Fundraising Efforts: We will be working on ideas for fundraisers.

❖ Community Meetings / Events: We will continue to have community meetings in various locations of the county.

- ❖ Promotion of Disclosures to Renters & Buyers: We plan to pursue getting something in place where realtors handling rentals and purchases of homes will have to provide disclosures informing the interested parties about any prior drug activity on the property.
- ❖ Billboards have been approved.

Other Comments: JW Simmons continued that the Meth Task Force is moving forward with our efforts. We want everyone to understand that Meth is an addictive, chronic brain disease. It is often associated with other gateway drugs including marijuana, cocaine, etc. It is important to remember that over 80% of illegal methamphetamine is imported from Mexico and southern California. The removal of pseudoephedrine from over-the-counter access has been the main reason for reduction in the number of local Meth Labs. Thanks to Attorney General Roy Cooper, new laws have significantly reduced the access of this key ingredient, thus reducing extensive local production. Addiction is a disease and we cannot arrest our way out. We must continue aggressive prevention, intervention, and treatment programs. The cost of prevention and treatment is far less than incarceration. The Task Force will continue its efforts to save our citizens from this horrible addiction.

Adjourn: A motion was made by Pat Green to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jeff Shipp with complete support by the Board.

JW Simmons, President

Date