



## **Madigan pushes Meth Project during visit**

By Diane Wilkins

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Marion, Ill. - Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan spent most of Tuesday in Southern Illinois visiting various venues.

Madigan's major event was in support of the Illinois Meth Project held at John A. Logan College.

She was joined by law county sheriffs from all Southern Illinois counties as well as Senator Gary Forby, and Reps. John Bradley and Brandon Phelps.

The Illinois Meth Project is an effort targeted at teens to keep young people from trying meth even once. The campaign is patterned after a successful one done in Montana.

The ads are graphic in nature, pointing to the heartbreaking results of the use of methamphetamine. The ads have caused a significant drop in the teen and adult use of meth and meth-related crimes.

Similar ads have already been running in the Springfield, Decatur and Champaign area and target youths between 12 and 17.

The ads, using the voices of teens, include images of meth-using teens selling themselves for sex and clawing sores into their skin because they imagine bugs crawling on them. The campaign stresses the message the highly addictive drug shouldn't be used— "Not even once!"

A recent study reported that nearly one fourth of teens surveyed considered meth an easily accessible, low-risk drug that offers a myriad of benefits.

"Sadly, adolescents often have little or no factual information about the risks involved with illicit drug use, and make decisions based on incorrect assumptions and perceptions," said Wendy Bailie, Director of Substance Abuse Services at Franklin-Williamson Human Services. Bailie also serves on the Advisory Council for the Meth Project. "These results clearly show the gross misconceptions teens have regarding methamphetamine use. Many just don't realize the destruction that comes with trying meth."

Madigan praised the Southern Illinois team that has worked aggressively to attack the meth problem. "Senator Gary Forby, Reps. John Bradley and Brandon Phelps have led the charge in the General Assembly to pass laws that make it more difficult to purchase the ingredients to manufacture meth," Madigan said. "These law enforcement leaders have been on the front line of this fight."

The meth press conference concluded a morning of visits in Williamson County. Madigan started the morning with an informal meeting of about 50 people at Latta Java Coffee Shop in Marion where she was able to hear what was on the minds of those in attendance. After leaving Latta Java Madigan went to Jefferson Elementary School to talk with the students and answer questions.

While at Jefferson, Marion High School students presented Madigan with a plaque honoring her service. Future Business Leaders of America representatives Brandon Woods, Cody Simmerman and Rachel Arnold did the honors.

Madigan answered a few questions prepared by Jefferson fifth-graders, including a job description. She focused on her work with children,

"One of the most important things I do is working to protect children," she said. "I enjoy making sure you're safe when you're on the Internet."

Madigan interacted with the students who seemed to enjoy the time spent with one of the state's highest ranking elected officials.