

# **County of Summit Methamphetamine Property Awareness Task Force**



**Proposed Recommendations to the  
Summit County Council  
July 17, 2008**

## **Introduction/Background**

The establishment of the Summit County Methamphetamine Property Awareness Task Force took place March 17, 2008 with unanimous support from Council. The legislation was submitted by At-Large Council member Jon Poda. Mr. Poda wanted to bring together key experts in the county to examine what could be done to better inform residents about properties that may have been negatively affected by the production or presence of the drug methamphetamine. Per the legislation, the purpose of the establishment of the task force is listed as follows:

- 1) Examine and recommend plans for the County that would help inform residents about properties that have been exposed to methamphetamines and/or their production.
- 2) Develop ways of lessening the detrimental effects of methamphetamine production in County residences, by enhanced collaboration with Summit County's various agencies and departments.
- 3) Recommend a plan for promoting awareness, participation, and literacy throughout the community in regard to the potential dangers of living in a property that has had the presence of methamphetamines and providing information on property remediation.

## **Objectives**

One of the challenges faced by the task force was how to **create an effective means to inform Summit County residents of the properties containing methamphetamine (hereafter referred to as meth) while not officially declaring any particular property as either safe or unsafe for human habitation.** This problem is based on the fact that neither Ohio nor the federal government has **established** scientific standards that Summit County could turn to in order to make a qualified determination of meth levels. The general consensus of the task force has been that it should not attempt to mirror standards set in place by other states or create its own due to potential liability issues. Additionally, the fact that the elements involved with each meth site vary considerably **makes the process of creating any such** criteria for safe and unsafe properties an extremely arduous one.

Although the task force does not feel the county should get into the business of setting scientific standards of harmful meth levels, members feel residents should be provided with as much information as possible regarding which properties have been found to have **meth exposure** as well as numerous other useful resources on the topic of meth.

Therefore, one of the first objectives of the task force was to plan to establish a county-wide website database that could provide such information.

But before a property database could be established, the county first faced the task of establishing that every meth location discovered by law enforcement officials was recorded by one central location. Though the vast majority of locations in the county are processed by the Summit County Drug Unit and recorded by the Summit County Sheriff's Office, there are a few communities that operate independently from them when processing meth sites. These locations needed to be accounted for in order for there to be a true, comprehensive county-wide site.

### **Recommendation 1**

**Every law enforcement agency that processes a meth site should submit a copy of a completed EPIC (El Paso Intelligence Center) form to the Sheriff's office for documenting.** The use of this nationally-recognized form will ensure the process of reporting meth locations county-wide is a uniform one. By centrally locating the meth site information, the county can **establish and maintain** a website database that would definitively contain all locations in **Summit County known to county law enforcement agencies to have had some degree of meth exposure.** Through a memo of understanding, the county should have all the necessary law enforcement entities in the county agree to the submission of the form to the Sheriff's office.

### **Recommendation 2**

**The county should establish an informational website database that will contain a listing of properties known to Summit County law enforcement agencies to have been used for the production of meth or the storage or disposal of meth components, bi-products, or waste, as well as other useful resources and educational components.** Included on the website would be a search engine that would link to the meth property information from the Sheriff's office; information about which law enforcement agency was responsible for the processing of a meth location; information about how a property owner can submit information that notes when a property has been remediated; a disclaimer prepared by the Executive's Department of Law that states the county cannot verify the validity of such documentation; an educational component consisting of various meth resources and tools to help inform the public. The Sheriff's office shall be responsible for maintaining the meth site property information for the website, while the remainder of the website will be an ongoing collaborative effort established and continuously updated with input from members of the task force and spearheaded by the Council office.

### **Recommendation 3**

**The County Council should urge the state and federal governments to establish meth cleanup guidelines and/or fit to use standards.** If guidelines are set, the county may be able to set more comprehensive policies that would include information on cleanup as well as other issues concerning public health and meth.

### **Task Force Members**

Jon Poda of Summit County Council, Jason Dodson of the Executive's Office, Captain Hylton Baker of the Summit County Sheriff's Office, Stacy Dodson of the Summit County Fiscal Office, Cynthia Sich of the Summit County Consumer Affairs Office,

Joanne Arndt of the Summit County ADM Board, Terry Tuttle of the Summit County General Health District, Duane Groeger of the Akron Health Department, Chief Michael Mier of the Copley Police Department, Warren Walfish of the Summit County Department of Development, Paulette Kline of the Barberton/Norton Health District, Dan Horigan, Summit County Clerk of Courts, Kevin Mayer of the Summit County Prosecutor's Office, William Wilkinson, public representative, Glenn Payne of the Akron Police Department.