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Contact: General Dan Alsobrooks
Judicial District 23
(615) 789-5021
dmalsobrooks@tndagc.org

Diane Hargrove
McNeely Pigott & Fox
(615) 259-4000
dhargrove@mpf.com

TENNESSEE DISTRICT ATTORNEYS TO ROLLOUT PSAs, BILLBOARDS AS 'METH DESTROYS' CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

The Tennessee District Attorneys General Conference is preparing to roll out new TV public service announcements featuring recovering methamphetamine addicts from Tennessee as part of the yearlong *Meth Destroys* campaign.

The statewide education campaign, which is being funded by a grant from Gov. Phil Bredesen's office, will also include the placement of billboards across the state aimed at encouraging more people to visit the campaign's Web site, **www.MethFreeTN.org**.

The new elements of the campaign come in the wake of the *Meth Destroys* kickoff in November, which has substantially increased attention on the meth problem in Tennessee through presentations by the district attorneys general and other campaign partners to students groups as well as through other public outreach efforts.

The PSAs feature powerful messages delivered by Tennesseans who are recovering from meth addiction. Those featured in the new ads are from Memphis, Nashville, Cookeville and Cleveland.

They speak candidly about the drug's effect on them as well as on their families and friends, and about how the devastating impact continues to haunt them on a day-to-day basis.

The fight against meth intensified in 2005 as Gov. Bredesen and the state's district attorneys teamed up with law enforcement agencies and campaign partners to raise awareness about the drug's dangers and enforce new state laws that make it harder

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to obtain the primary ingredients of meth and increase the penalties for those who produce and sell it.

“Looking back at 2005, we made great progress in fighting the meth problem in our community, Tennessee and at the national level through legislation and educational efforts,” said District Attorney General Dan Alsobrooks who is spearheading the District Attorneys’ statewide efforts. “We hope that people realize the seriousness of this drug and take a proactive stance against it.”

The Meth-Free Tennessee Act, signed into law on March 30, has had a significant impact in reducing the number of meth labs in the state, officials say. Lab seizures decreased 39 percent in May and 59 percent in June, according to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

“Despite this decrease, meth continues to be a growing problem in our state,” Gov. Bredesen said. “We hope that our aggressive campaign to educate residents about the dangers of the drug and new laws increasing meth-related penalties will discourage meth use and send a strong signal to producers and dealers that we’re serious about coming after them.”

Gov. Bredesen assisted the Tennessee District Attorneys General Conference in launching the *Meth Destroys* statewide education campaign on Nov. 7 in Hendersonville. As part of the campaign, District Attorney Alsobrooks and all Tennessee district attorneys are working to educate individuals about the dangers of methamphetamine and the destructive effect it has on individuals, families and communities.

The state’s anti-meth Web site was also redesigned and updated. Since its launch in November, individuals have visited www.MethFreeTN.org more than 575,000 times.

As part of *Meth Destroys*, Gen. Alsobrooks has been active in sharing meth’s dangers with youth and the community through school visits and presentations to business organizations.

In addition to the PSAs and billboards, the campaign includes the ongoing distribution of a youth brochure, posters, bumper stickers, window clings and other materials. It will soon include a standards-based activity guide for middle and high school teachers, an adult education booklet and special informational fliers.

During 2006, Gen. Alsobrooks will be making additional presentations about methamphetamine to middle and high school students, as well as community organizations.

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The education campaign and new laws were among the recommendations of a task force appointed by Gov. Bredesen in 2004.

Provisions of the law include requiring pharmacies to move cold and sinus pills containing pseudoephedrine, a decongestant that is a key ingredient for making meth, behind the counter. Retailers without a pharmacy were required to stop selling the products. Other provisions increased the penalties for those convicted of making meth and for those who began the process or bought, sold, delivered or possessed ingredients or equipment needed to make the highly addictive drug.

For more information about *Meth Destroys*, visit **www.MethFreeTN.org**.

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