

THE EFFECTS OF METHAMPHETAMINES IN LIVINGSTON COUNTY-COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS-WRITTEN BY ED DOUGLAS PRESIDING COMMISSIONER

Methamphetamine or Meth is causing significant problems in our County. One major concern is the effect on our county's budget. Our jail population has doubled in 2024 from \$30 per day to \$60 per day with meth and other drugs being the main culprits. At an average cost of \$55 per day per prisoner times thirty extra prisoners, times 365 days equals an extra \$602,250 per year of expense. The State of Missouri does reimburse the County \$24.95 per prisoner if a prisoner is ultimately sent to State prison which helps offset some of the cost but the net expense to the county is very large. Additionally, with this sudden increase in 2024 who knows what will happen in future years.

I had a meeting with our Prosecuting Attorney, Adam Warren and Police Chief Jon Maples and Sheriff Dustin Woelfe to brainstorm about what we can do about this situation. Adam Warren has done an excellent job over his four terms of office of expediting cases through the judiciary system as quickly as possible to get people out of jail and into prison or on probation, thereby reducing our county's costs. Adam suggested at this meeting that enlisting a grand jury to review drug cases could reduce the time prisoners are in jail before disposition of their case from 6 months to 4 months which would be a significant help. We have suggested this to Judge Ryan Horseman and although a grand jury would move cases to Judge Horseman's docket earlier, which creates more work for him in the short term, he is very willing to work hard and hear on all cases before him, which would help the County.

In addition to the financial effects on the County, drugs and meth in particular cause huge costs to society. Probably 80% of the crime in the County is drug related. I cannot even pretend to understand the effects of meth on user's lives. Meth is a synthetic stimulant that is highly addictive. Meth can be injected, smoked, snorted or consumed orally. It creates a euphoric effect. The data I have reviewed says that nearly 7% of high school seniors in the United States have used the drug at least once. Meth use is associated with many serious problems including rapid heart rate, damage to the small blood vessels in the brain which can lead to stroke and inflammation of the heart lining. Users may have episodes of violent behavior, paranoia, anxiety, confusion, insomnia, and psychotic symptoms that persist for months. The most disturbing effect is that the drug is so addictive, and withdrawal is so severe, that only 15-20% ever really recover from addiction.

Our County along with counties all across the US has received some opioid settlement money and we are using some of this to help finance a part time school resource officer through the Sheriff's department who will implement the DARE program (Drug Abuse Resistance Program) at Chula High School, Southwest High School and Bishop Hogan.

Chillicothe RII Schools already has several school resource officers for this purpose. We hope to educate kids to just say no to drugs.

I wish I knew the answer to the drug problem. For the last several years drug overdose deaths in the US has been over 100,000 per year. Livingston County is not immune to this problem. More recently, fentanyl coming across the border along with the other drugs has magnified the dilemma. This is a conundrum that effects all of us and can only be solved if we all work together to restrict the proliferation of drugs and to educate everyone, especially our youth regarding the dangers of every using or trying any drugs. It will take all of us to help turn this problem around.