

## **Siebel says meth project raised \$500,000, but needs more...**

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By Matt Gouras

HELENA, Mont. (AP) - Montana Meth Project founder Tom Siebel said Thursday the group has raised more than \$500,000 this year as part of an effort to persuade Montanans to pay for the anti-methamphetamine advertising campaign.

Siebel, a software billionaire and part-time Montana resident, launched the project with the aim of using consumer research-based advertising to reduce use of the drug. He said that goal is proving successful and is backed by analysis showing a drastic increase in the awareness of the dangers posed by meth.

"The results in the state of Montana have been nothing short of remarkable," he told the Hometown Helena group. "If this data holds up, this is the most effective anti-drug effort in history."

Siebel, who has promised to match up to \$5 million in private donations, said corporations and individuals in the state have risen to the fundraising challenge.

Siebel said the program's shocking series of advertisements have been honored nationally and internationally for their effectiveness. He said the campaign has raised the profile of the meth problem, prompting federal legislation to help deal with it.

The Montana Legislature earlier this year decided to earmark \$1 million in state tax money toward the project, which must clear a competitive bid process. Federal money for the program is also in the works.

But Siebel said more donations are needed.

"We need money," he told Helena officials and business leaders. "I hope you make the decision to fund it."

Siebel was also somewhat critical of the trend toward locking up drug addicts. He said that strategy is costly, compared to prevention, treatment and other methods.

"We used to put people we were scared of in jail, now we put people in jail we're mad at," he said. "It's a little bit crazy."

The Meth Project, which has been rolled out in other states, launches a new round of advertisements in January 2008, Siebel said.