

# Forum to provide 'Cold Truth'

I've had a cold for about three weeks now, much to the increasing annoyance of all of my co-workers.

I've tried a number of over-the-counter medicines, but never once did I think about going to the pharmacist's counter and signing in for cold medicine that contains pseudoephedrine.

Of course, maybe if I had, I wouldn't still have this cold. But once they put those products behind the counter, they were out of sight and out of mind for me.

Police Chief Lane Roberts recently proposed to the City Council that the city adopt an ordinance making medicines containing pseudoephedrine available by prescription only. At the same time, Gov. Jay Nixon has been pushing for a statewide law that would have the same effect. Neither has been enacted as yet, but some towns across Missouri have passed laws requiring a prescription to obtain pseudoephedrine.

If you're like me, and you take something else for a cold, it doesn't seem like such a big deal. But, I have found a number of folks who rely on products with pseudoephedrine to battle sinus and allergy conditions. And they are concerned about how this law could affect them — and their pocketbooks.

They are good people, they just have runny noses.

But, they are also concerned about Missouri having earned the rating of being the meth capital of the country. Yes, we are No. 1 in number of meth labs. And Jasper County, followed closely by Newton County are in the top spots when it comes to the number of meth



**CAROL STARK**

Columnist

labs busted. The link between these two subjects is pseudoephedrine HCl (PSE). It is the essential ingredient in making meth, and every meth lab located in Missouri uses PSE-containing cold tablets to make the stuff.

Roberts and I have disagreed back and forth about the effects of banning pseudoephedrine from counter sales. I say drug dealers will just scurry like rats over to another town. If Missouri bans it, then given our proximity to Kansas and Oklahoma, the rats will just cross the border.

Scott Goforth, with the Parsons Police Department, is watching Joplin closely for that exact reason. He agrees with Roberts, but wonders how it will rebound. Terry Durborow, Ottawa County (Okla.) sheriff, told me he wishes all PSE would go back to prescription. The drug was available by prescription until 1976, when the Food and Drug Administration agreed to make it more readily available as a treatment for colds and sinus problems. The Drug Enforcement Administration warned then of the danger of methamphetamine labs.

Definitely, there are a lot of sides to this issue.

I want to invite you to join us Thursday night for an informational forum called "The Cold Truth." The Joplin Globe, with funding from Empire District Electric Co. and the production

skills of the KGCS-TV staff and students, will air the forum at 7 p.m. You can watch it on [joplinglobe.com](http://joplinglobe.com) or digital Channel 22, Cable One Channel 7 or Mediacom Channel 77. We also have limited seating available in Corley Auditorium at Webster Hall on the Missouri Southern State University campus. Free tickets are available at the front desk at the Globe.

In addition to Chief Roberts, our forum speakers will be Kathy Wilson, director of Joplin Hope House, a re-entry and recovery program; Tim Mitchell, a Neosho pharmacist and a member of the Missouri Pharmacy Association; and Jason Grellner, the narcotics unit commander of the Franklin County Sheriff's Department. Grellner has also been featured on the A&E television special "Meth, a Country in Crisis."

Debby Woodin, city hall reporter for the Globe, Jeff Lehr, crime and courts reporter, and I will direct questions to the panel. I will also be selecting several from the audience to ask questions.

This isn't a debate. I've already talked to the forum speakers and have asked them to relate facts as they pertain to their jobs.

While there will be plenty of discussion on this particular proposal, no one is questioning the alarming meth outbreak in our community. It's costing taxpayers money. It's ruining families and it's putting our children at peril. We have nothing to lose by talking about this proposal.

**CAROL STARK** is editor of The Joplin Globe. Address correspondence to her, c/o The Joplin Globe, P.O. Box 7, Joplin, MO 64802 or e-mail [cstark@joplinglobe.com](mailto:cstark@joplinglobe.com).

that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.'

Matthew 26:41

## Joke of the day

**TOYOTA WAS FOUND** by the U.S. government Tuesday to have electronic flaws which caused any sudden acceleration. The automaker just introduced its new electric car in Tokyo. Technically, it doesn't actually become electrified until after it hits the light pole.

**Argus Hamilton**  
Comedian

## Write us

Have something on your mind? Write and tell us about it. But we must have your name, address and telephone number.

Keep your letters concise, no more than 300 words.

We reserve the right to edit letters for length, clarity, good taste and libel.

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