

Strawberry Meth didn't take long to arrive in the Ozarks

by Michelle Sherwood, KY3 News

WILLARD, Mo. -- A new twist to an old drug may make it more appealing to children. It's called strawberry quick -- strawberry flavoring added to methamphetamine to make it taste more like candy -- and it's already made its appearance in the Ozarks.

The first sighting of strawberry quick was in Willard, not too far from the town's debris dumpsite. It's strawberry flavored and it could be the first of a new trend. It's causing a major buzz with law officers and community groups.

It looks like rock candy, the kind someone might buy as a treat, but there's nothing sweet about these crystals.

"It has a more user-friendly appearance, if you will," said Capt. Randy Gibson of the Greene County Sheriff's Department.

Strawberry quick is basically meth with pink coloring and strawberry flavoring to remove the bitter taste of just plain meth. It showed up on the west coast in mid-February and, in almost no time, wound up here.

"It was almost overnight," said Gibson.

Greene County officers recently pulled over a car for a traffic violation and found about two grams of it in a seat. So far, detectives think it's the only case in this area but that doesn't stop community leaders from worrying about the drug's impact on kids.

"When it's put in that kind of format, people often think it's less hazardous," said Melissa Haddow, executive director of Community Partnership of the Ozarks. "This may appeal to kids that meth or crystal would not appeal to."

Haddow compares it to how kids think of alcohol. Many see hard liquor, like gin, as dangerous but, at the same time, see drinks like wine coolers as safe.

"I don't know if it's deliberately targeted to kids but certainly it's going to be more palatable for kids," said Gibson.

"I don't think it is huge right now in the Ozarks at all," said Haddow, "but we don't want to glamorize it, that's for sure."

The Community Partnership is sending out surveys to area schools to get an idea of how bad meth is among students and to see how much they know, if anything, about strawberry quick.