

KTEN-TV ISSUES LIST OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2002

October 2002 - Drug Use (specifically methamphetamine use)

Meth has become a major problem in the Texoma region. In some areas, the number of meth-related arrests has almost doubled in the past year. Authorities in the area are concerned that use of the drug by teenagers is rising at an alarming rate. Even worse, meth is so addictive health officials say you can become hooked after just one use. Local law enforcement agencies are finding the easier it is to get meth on the streets, the harder it is to convince teens of the drug's danger. Narcotics Agent, Jerry Harris, says meth labs pop up on a near daily basis. Realizing that this drug problem is nearing a crisis for this region, KTEN news took the month of October to make viewers aware of not only the uphill battle area authorities are facing, but the struggles area teenagers are dealing with on a daily basis.

- To make viewers aware of the recurring problem KTEN reported on a Texoma resident who went to a local hospital for treatment after accidentally shooting himself in the leg. When police went to investigate the scene they discovered a meth lab and more than three ounces of meth. The man fled from the hospital. Police were able to send us a picture of the man that we included in the story. (October 1 at 12:00 p.m.)
- On this same day, KTEN covered a drug sting that began at six in the morning. The Sherman Police Department along with several state and federal agencies, one of these being the F.B.I., arrested five alleged cocaine dealers. The men, known for their violent pasts, were charged with conspiracy to distribute cocaine. KTEN also reported that authorities were still searching for eight other Texomans that would be arrested. (October 1 at 6:00 p.m. and 10 p.m.)
- Police flying over DeSoto, Texas, discovered a crude outdoor drug lab. Police chased the suspects in a stolen car and eventually were able to arrest one of the suspects but the other was still on the run. (October 3 at 6:00 p.m.)
- Two days later KTEN covered a major drug bust that resulted in a large amount of marijuana, a substance believed to be crack cocaine, more than five thousand dollars in cash and two guns. A Texoma man was arrested and faced weapons and drugs charges. (October 5, 2002 at 10 p.m.)
- The newsroom continued working with area officials to cover these major drug busts so viewers would stay aware of the prevalence of drugs in the area. The newsroom covered a four-month investigation that led authorities to one of Ardmore's main meth suppliers. Police arrested two men and found more than 150 grams of meth, 1 pound of marijuana and numerous firearms. (October 8, 2002 at 6 p.m. and 10 p.m.) Another drug bust the next week led authorities to a meth manufacturing lab where several gallons of liquids used to make meth were discovered.
- KTEN wrapped up the month by sending to reporter to Murray State College where a training session was held citizens and public servants concerned about the pervasiveness of meth labs throughout the region. Narcotics Agent

Jerry Harris taught public servants and ordinary citizens the dangers of meth, how to spot a lab, and what to do to get one shut down. He stressed that those who work in and around homes everyday need to be aware of the dangers of meth labs (the ingredients used are known to be highly explosive materials) and alert authorities as soon as possible.

November 2002 – Election Coverage with specific focus on the Oklahoma Cockfighting Ban

Election day was a big day for Texomans on both sides of the river. Texas and Oklahoma had heated Governor, Senate, and Congressional races going on, however, the biggest controversy in our viewing area was the proposal to ban cockfighting in the state of Oklahoma. The ban pitted animal rights activists against a 100 year-old rural tradition in the state. For many residents in southeastern Oklahoma cockfighting is considered not only a sport, but a livelihood for many. The newsroom was aware the outcome of this vote would effect a large portion of our Oklahoma viewing area.

- KTEN monitored the polls closely on the day of the election. On our 10 p.m. newscast we gave viewers the latest updates on races in both Texas and Oklahoma. (November 5 at 10 p.m.)
- The newsroom put specific focus into the vote to ban cockfighting and whether it looked as though the ban was going to pass. A KTEN reporter from our Ardmore Bureau interviewed an Oklahoma resident who made a living off of a cockfighting arena she owned and how her life would be changed should the vote pass.
- The next day KTEN ran another story about the results of the proposal to ban the sport. The ban was passed but by a margin of 56 percent to 44 percent. KTEN informed viewers when the ban would go into effect and that the ban now meant it would be a felony for anyone to own a bird for the purpose of fighting. The station also broadcast to viewers that gamecock owners must sell their birds, kill them or keep them and be at risk for arrest. We interviewed a Texoma resident who said he owned \$35,000 worth of birds but that he would not risk going to jail for a hobby. (November 6 at 10 p.m.)
- The newsroom continued to follow the issue. Several days later a McCurtain County judge signed an order that prevented state officials and sheriffs of McCurtain, Pushmataha, and Choctaw counties from enforcing the ban until a hearing was held on November 18th. (November 8 at 5 p.m., 6 p.m., and 10 p.m.)
- A week later KTEN informed viewers that although the ban won a majority in all but 20 of Oklahoma's 77 counties, several other counties were joining in to block the ban. (November 16 at 6 p.m. and 10 p.m.)
- KTEN kept their viewers up-to-date on the latest developments by those for and against the issue. By the end of the month several judges were calling the law unconstitutional and ordered authorities not to enforce it. The issue came to a standstill when Oklahoma's Attorney General said he planned to ask the State Supreme Court to consolidate all the cockfighting lawsuits in the state.

December 2002 – Health and Fitness

December is when the holiday season kicks into full swing... along with the flu season, stress, and poor diet.

- KTEN began the month by reporting on flu vaccinations. Grayson County had plenty of vaccine to supply residents in the area. The problem health officials were running into was the number of people getting the shot was much lower than expected. County health officials said this was the first time in a long time there were more shots than interest. KTEN informed viewers that officials were warning that several cases of influenza were starting to pop near the area and it was especially crucial for young children and the elderly to get vaccinated. (December 3 at 5 p.m., 6 p.m. and 10 p.m.)
- The holidays are supposed to be a joyous time but for some it can be stressful and demanding. KTEN reported on local doctors offices that were seeing an increase in patients experiencing stress-related problems. We also informed viewers of stress-related symptoms like mood changes, lack of sleep and changes in appetite. (December 5 at 5 p.m.)
- Sweets and traditional foods are also a major part of the holiday season but it's easy to lose track of how many cakes, cookies and candies you eat. A KTEN reporter met with fitness experts at a local health center to inform viewers on how to beat the holiday bulge by exercising. Viewers were given tips on diet and exercise after indulging on all the holiday goodies. (December 26 at 5 p.m., 6 p.m. and 10 p.m.)

Issues Addressed by KTEN in the coming months

Economy-Because of significant layoffs in the private sector and widely reported shortfalls in government budgets, KTEN will continue to monitor the economic health of the state of Texas, and, in particular, of the Texoma area.