

Police hope meth funding gets to Craig

By [Brandon Johnson](#)

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Craig police Chief Walt Vanatta is hoping some of the more than \$100 million in federal funding earmarked to fight methamphetamine makes its way to Craig.

Earlier this month, Congress passed the Combat Meth Act, which was included in the USA Patriot Act.

The meth act, which Colorado Sen. Ken Salazar co-sponsored, authorizes \$99 million a year to train state and local law enforcement agencies to fight the spread of meth use. The act also authorizes \$20 million in grant funding in 2006 and 2007 to assist children affected by meth.

Vanatta said Craig police and the Greater Routt and Moffat Narcotics Enforcement Team will try to get some of the funding that the act calls for.

Salazar said in a statement that meth use is a problem for communities across the nation, but the drug is particularly harmful in rural communities.

"Although meth use is prevalent in our rural communities in Colorado, many of these areas lack adequate resources to confront the problem and to provide prevention and treatment," Salazar said.

The senator also said the federal government needs to be more involved in fighting meth.

"While this battle against meth will be fought and won on the local and state levels, the federal government can and should be a more effective partner in this effort by providing local law enforcement agencies with the tools they need to effectively halt the spread of meth," Salazar said.

Vanatta said he was glad to see the federal government stepping in to fight meth use but that there is still more to be done.

"This issue, I think, is far bigger than Congress passing more laws," Vanatta said.

If local police arrest meth users and dealers, they need somewhere to put them. But there isn't always enough resources to jail the people police arrest, Vanatta said.

Officials also need to focus on treatment and prevention, instead of just locking people up, he said.

"Punishment is not going to cure this problem," Vanatta said.

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