

The Huntsville Times

Awareness campaign to address teen drinking

Town forum, program
participation of schools
part of group's effort

By WENDY REEVES

*Times Staff Writer
wendyr@htimes.com*

A national public awareness campaign is about to get under way to address teenage drinking, said Deborah Soule, executive director for Partnership for a Drug Free Community.

"Let's face it, alcohol is killing our kids," Soule said at the partnership's winter board meeting last week. It was attended by about 40 people.

She said nearly 29 percent of young people between the ages of 12 and 20 say they are already drinking, according to a 2004 national survey on drug use and health.

As part of the national campaign, she said the federal Office of National Drug Control Policy has requested community coalitions getting grant money from the agency to hold forums about teenage drinking.

The partnership has tentatively set a town forum on the topic in March, which will be followed by awareness efforts in the schools throughout the month of April.

The group is also trying to get area clergy involved with the fight against drugs.

Soule said clergy members can learn about local drug problems at a meeting next month with Madison County Sheriff Blake Dorning, Huntsville Police Chief Rex Reynolds and Gerry Norris, commander of the Madison-Morgan County Strategic Counterdrug Team.

A clergy roundtable breakfast is scheduled at 8 a.m. on Feb. 9 at Gibson's Barbecue.

For information on the program, call Soule at 539-7339.



Executive Director Deborah Soule of the Partnership for a Drug Free Community says alcohol is "killing our kids."