

There was both the good news and the bad news this week detailing drug operations around Gallup and McKinley County.

The good news is that at least eight suspected methamphetamine abusers have been taken off the streets. Arrests were made as part of the city's routine sweeps of various neighborhoods by the Gallup Police Department and the McKinley County Narcotics Task Force.

The bad news is that we still have a serious problem in Gallup and the surrounding areas when it comes to meth, cocaine, marijuana and heroin.

The arrests that took place were all over the city. John Paradise, a habitual criminal who is still in custody on a $8,000 bond amount, was one of those booked into the McKinley County Adult Detention Center, and another frequent name on the *Gallup Sun* pages, Darrell Desederio, was taken into custody on an outstanding warrant.

The city and county police have said that meth has become a dangerous scourge in our community.

We agree.

Besides Paradise and Desederio, six other people were taken into custody by police on suspected drug charges. Isiah Tso was booked by Gallup Lt. Billy Padavich on suspected meth

possession, according to police reports.

A local drug addict once said this about meth: “You have Satan and you have the demons he controls. All the other drugs are pretty much the demons. Meth is Satan himself.”

Although we support and applaud the recent law enforcement actions resulting in the arrests, we’re not convinced that this negative publicity is going to substantially deter future drug use in and around McKinley County. Sure, it’s a step in the right direction, but more – much more – needs to be accomplished.

First, there needs to be a renewed effort to educate our young people about the dangers of drug abuse. In a county where alcohol is king, it’s easy to forget about the dangers of drug use. The effort to get rid of drug and alcohol abuse must begin at home and must be vigorously supported by institutions like schools. We have to assume that our kids will experiment with drugs at some point, and we, accordingly, have to make them aware of the legal and health consequences.

Those who protect and serve must continue their enforcement of the laws related to illegal drugs and alcohol. And the judicial system must see that those convicted of drug offenses receive the appropriate punishments. And we as individuals must lead by example as our combatants can always use a helping hand.

Complacency is the enemy.