



## SEK to serve as test for program

By Kevin Flaherty | THE MORNING SUN

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When makers of meth "smurf", it doesn't mean turning blue and moving into mushroom houses.

Instead, the term smurfing refers to when a person travels from town to town, purchasing the precursors of methamphetamine and skirting the current process designed to stop them from purchasing more than their limit on the chemicals.

"Right now, all we keep are paper logs," said Laurie Graham, Arma Drug owner and pharmacist. "It makes it almost impossible to track."

Soon, it might not be nearly as difficult. Crawford County Sheriff Sandy Horton said a company, the Kansas Bureau of Investigation and the Southeast Kansas Drug Task Force were working to find a solution to the problem. The company, Appriss Technology, features an on-line program that would allow local law enforcement to track, in real-time, purchasers buying up ingredients to cook meth. A person's purchases would be tracked by their driver's license number.

"It diagnoses the data and transfers it to law enforcement, saying 'Bob just bought more than his limit of a certain ingredient,'" Horton said. "Then, the responsibility transfers to us, as law enforcement, in an investigative element."

The program would link together pharmacies, effectively working to eliminate smurfers from hopping store-to-store.

"I think it would be very beneficial," Graham said. "Electronic real-time tracking would be helpful, and it would do our part help against illegal trafficking."

The Kansas House originally passed a proposal to make the program state-wide, but it was rejected by the Senate. Horton said Appriss then offered to do a pilot program for six southeast Kansas counties — Crawford, Cherokee, Bourbon, Labette, Neosho and Allen — at the company's cost.

Horton said the next step was to meet with the KBI, Appriss, SEK Drug Task Force and the Kansas Board of Pharmacy to figure out how to proceed.

"We have the potential to be an excellent test module," Horton said. "Going in and looking at the logs is very time consuming, and it just isn't effective. This would shorten the process. It's a very good thing for law enforcement. It's a fantastic tool."

Initially, the program will be on a voluntary basis for pharmacies, but Graham said she would be quick to sign up.

"It's a major problem here," Graham said. "Unfortunately, we do see it in our store, and I assume others do as well. We'll do what we can to help."