

Red Barrel program aiming to fight Rx abuse

By Daily Telegram staff

ADRIAN — A panel discussion of prescription drug abuse is to mark the Wednesday, May 1, beginning of a permanent drug collection program in Lenawee County. The public event is to take place from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. in the River Raisin Room of the Lenawee County Human Services Building on South Winter Street. An agent from the federal Drug Enforcement Agency and a ProMedica pharmacist are to join local law enforcement, counseling and health officials in kicking off the Big Red Barrel Drop Box program. The program was organized through the Lenawee Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition.

Bright red collection containers have already been delivered to offices of the Adrian, Hudson and Tecumseh police departments, said coalition coordinator Leigh Jameson-Heise. A fourth red barrel is to be delivered to the Lenawee County Sheriff's Department lobby after the Wednesday morning event. Starting Wednesday, citizens will be able to drop expired or unwanted prescription drugs in the containers with no questions asked. The containers are to be available during regular business hours at each of the four police agency offices.

"People think it's a really good program," Jameson-Heise said. Community support translated into donations to pay for the secure containers that she said cost \$500 each. The Adrian Noon Kiwanis Club paid for the barrel at the sheriff's department. The Terry Collins family paid for the barrel at the Adrian Police Department. Hudson Pharmacy paid for the Hudson Police Department barrel. And the Tecumseh Coalition for Youth paid for the Tecumseh Police Department barrel. Lenawee County Prosecutor Burke Castleberry obtained a \$100 donation from the state Prosecuting Attorneys Association and Prosecuting Attorney Coordinating Council and raised other money to help cover the cost of disposing of drugs collected in the barrels.

Wednesday's panel discussion is to highlight reasons for creating a system to safely dispose of potentially dangerous prescription drugs. Communities that have succeeded in reducing the availability of prescription drugs for misuse have seen fewer young people move from pills to heroin and other dangerous drugs, said Jameson-Heise. DEA agent Rich Isaacson is to discuss his experience in the field. Gary McCullough of McCullough, Vargas & Associates is to explain how pill abuse leads to other addictions and what can be done to help. Joe Carney of the Livingston County Community Alliance is to talk about what has been done to reduce drug problems in his area. ProMedica pharmacist Jean Osborn, Lenawee County Sheriff Jack Welsh and Lenawee County environmental health director Martha Hall are also to contribute to the discussion.



Adrian Police Chief Vince Emrick stands with a collection barrel that will be used for the disposal of prescription drugs.