

Tomah Memorial Hospital, Tomah

Hospital, police organize Earth Day medication collection event

Robert Hayward of Camp Douglas said he was glad Tomah Police and Tomah Memorial Hospital provided a safe way for him to get rid of his unused prescription medications.

“It was very important for me,” said Hayward, who was one of more than 250 residents who dropped off nearly 4,000 bottles and packages of tablets, capsules, liquids, creams, ointments, aerosols, inhalers, medication patches, plus animal and pet medications during the April 22 Earth Day event coordinated by Tomah Police and Tomah Memorial Hospital.

Officials dubbed the event “an overwhelming success” collecting 280 lbs of unwanted and outdated prescription and over-the-counter medications that were taken to the La Crosse County Hazardous Materials Facility for final disposal. The \$840 disposal fee was split between the hospital and police department.

Tomah Memorial Employee Health and Infection Control Nurse Jan Path said it was evident residents understood the impact the meds could have on the environment.

“I think having the event on Earth Day made people realize that it was something good they could do for the environment,” Path said. “Some people just instinctively held onto pills for years and knew that they didn’t want to flush them or throw them in the garbage. They commented when they brought their pills in that they had held onto them and were looking for a safe way to dispose of them,” she added. “So many people just thanked us over and over for having the event; they were just so happy to have a way to dispose of their medications.”

Tomah Police Chief Wes Revels said as a result of planning meetings with the hospital, research is underway to possibly make the police department a permanent medication drop-off location.