



Department of Justice

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THIRD NATIONWIDE PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAKE-BACK DAY A SUCCESS IN THE NORTH COUNTRY

November 4, 2011

[Plattsburgh, New York]—United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council and the District Attorneys in the North Country counties of Franklin, Clinton, Essex and St. Lawrence, today announced outstanding North Country participation in the third nationwide Prescription Drug Take-Back Day on October 29, 2011. The Prescription Drug Take-Back Day promotes drug abuse prevention and public safety by providing the community with an environmentally-safe, “no-questions asked” location to turn in prescription drugs that are no longer needed or are expired. Seventeen North Country law enforcement jurisdictions and communities participated in the October 29 event during which a total of 571 pounds of prescription drugs were collected for safe disposal, with 127.3 pounds from North Country nursing homes and long-term care facilities. In the DEA Pill Take Back Event on April 30, 2011, 451 pounds of prescription drugs were collected. As a result of these efforts, more than 1,021 pounds of prescription drugs were removed from North Country homes and streets through this community action program.

DEA officials, the United States Attorney’s Office, the four North Country District Attorneys, and the participating law enforcement agencies promoted the 2011 Pill Take Back Events as a way to raise community awareness, participation and assistance in the prevention of prescription drug abuse and criminal targeting of homes in which prescription drugs may be found. In the North Country, law enforcement, public service agencies and drug treatment services are attempting to

cope with and respond to an “epidemic” of prescription abuse, with rates of abuse in the North Country border counties of Clinton, Franklin and St. Lawrence among the highest per capita in New York state.

Community outreach and participation resulted in the following sites leading the event in terms of weight of drugs collected: Gouverneur Police Department, 69 pounds; Malone Police Department, 53.9 pounds; Kinney Drugs, Elizabethtown, 49.3 pounds; Saint Regis Mohawk Police Department, 48.04 pounds; and Massena Police Department, 46 pounds. The three Clinton County sites produced a total of 98 pounds of unneeded prescriptions. The following agencies also participated: Potsdam Police Department; Saint Lawrence County Sheriff’s Office; Ogdensburg Police Department; Canton Police Department; Ticonderoga Police Department; Lake Placid Police Department; and Essex County Sheriff’s Office at the Chesterfield, Wilmington and Westport Town Halls.

U.S. Attorney Hartunian noted growing community support for law enforcement’s efforts to address the real problem of illicit prescription drug abuse, especially among our young people who have the most to lose. “This problem affects the whole North Country community and requires a community-wide response to stem the scourge of illegal prescription drug abuse,” Hartunian said.

Any questions may be directed to Assistant U.S. Attorney Elizabeth Horsman, Plattsburgh, 518-314-7800, or DEA Resident Agent in Charge, David Leu, Plattsburgh, at 518-562-6900.