



## Office of the Mayor

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### **Athens Police helping community properly dispose of unused prescription drugs**

Those who have medicine cabinets full of unused or outdated prescription drugs now can properly dispose of them year-round at the Athens Police Department.

The Mayor's Office applied for a grant on behalf of the department to start a year-round drug take back program. Athens Police Chief Floyd Johnson said the department was hosting a once-a-year event but wanted to provide this service on a regular basis.

The Athens Police Department received a \$2,200 grant from Alabama's Mountains, Rivers and Valley's RC&D Council for the program. The agency serves Alabama's Tennessee River Valley through its mission to improve the quality of life of residents by the reasonable and responsible protection of the natural and human resources of the Tennessee Valley.

The department used the funds to purchase a MedReturn box and install it securely at the department where citizens can deposit their unused prescription drugs 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The department also is using the funds to advertise the new program.

Johnson said the RC&D grant and program serves the community from a safety and environmental standpoint.

"Families will not have to store unused and outdated medications in their homes waiting for an opportunity for the department to host a drug take back day," Johnson said. "Utilizing a year-round program decreases the chances of children or pets getting into stored medications in the home or those in the household abusing these medications. It also prevents potential environmental contamination from flushing or tossing medications in the trash."

The Environmental Protection Agency encourages the public to take advantage of pharmaceutical take-back collection programs that accept prescription or over-the-counter drugs "as these programs offer a safe and environmentally-conscious way to dispose of unwanted medicines."

Athens Mayor Ronnie Marks commended the Athens Police Department and RC&D for being proactive and addressing a need in the community.

"Our first responders are always out in the community engaging with citizens and learning ways they can make our community safer and more attractive," Marks said. "This is another example of our first responders seeing a need and stepping up to do their part. On behalf of the City of Athens, I thank RC&D for providing the funds for our Police Department to bring this program to our community."

Those who have unused prescription drugs, including pet medications, can bring them to the Athens Police Department located at 951 E. Hobbs Street. Bring the medications in their original containers with personal information removed or marked out, or bring in a sealed bag.

Do not bring needles, illegal drugs, inhalers, aerosol cans or biohazardous waste.

*Athens is...Classic. Southern. Character.*