



## GERALD ROBINSON

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# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### TRI-COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE/JEFFERSON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

**COLLECTING UNUSED/EXPIRED PRESCRIPTION DRUGS:** Jefferson County, Arkansas – April 23, 2012 – On Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup> 2012 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. the Tri-County Drug Task Force/Jefferson County Sheriff's Office and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) will give the public another opportunity to prevent pill abuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous expired, unused, and unwanted prescription drugs. Bring your medications for disposal to Brookshire's located at 2800 S. Hazel Street in Pine Bluff, AR., where the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office Mobile Incident Command Center will be on sight. The service is free and anonymous, no questions asked.

In 2011, Arkansans turned in 11,924 pounds—16.6 million tablets—of prescription drugs at various sites operated by the DEA and more than 100 state and local law enforcement partners. The submission of unused/expired prescription pills from Jefferson County was one of the highest amongst others.

This initiative addresses a vital public safety and public health issue. Medicines that languish in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse, and abuse. Rates of prescription drug abuse in the U.S. are alarmingly high, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses due to these drugs. Studies show that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet. The usual methods for disposing of unused medicines such as flushing them down the toilet or throwing them in the trash both pose potential safety and health hazards.

In 2010, Congress passed the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010, which amends the Controlled Substances Act to allow an "ultimate user" of controlled substance medications to dispose of them by delivering them to entities authorized by the Attorney General to accept them. The Act also allows the Attorney General to authorize long term care facilities to dispose of their residents' controlled substances in certain instances. DEA has begun drafting regulations to implement the Act, a process that can take as long as 24 months. Until new regulations are in place, local law enforcement agencies like the Tri-County Drug Task Force, Jefferson County Sheriff's Office and the DEA will continue to hold prescription drug take-back events every few months.