

## Stash and burn: 'Terminator' helps local authorities make sure drugs won't be back

By BOB TOMASZEWSKI btomaszewski@saukvalley.com 815-625-3600, ext. 5523 @TheBobMob

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STERLING – Local police have a new weapon in their war on drugs, and the firepower is kinda awesome.

Sterling Police, in collaboration with the Rock Falls Police Department, the Whiteside County Sheriff's Department and the county health department, are the proud owners of the "Drug Terminator" – a wood-fired incinerator on wheels that can be used to destroy prescription drugs, confiscated narcotics, old drug evidence, etc.



*PHOTO: Basically a turbo-powered burn barrel, the wood-fueled Drug Terminator features a high-powered fan that creates a vortex of flame. Here, Sterling Deputy Police Chief Jeff Mohr uses a tray and push rod to deliver a batch into the barrel. (Alex T. Paschal/apaschal@saukvalley.com)*

The incinerator, which cost around \$4,500, has a blower attachment that creates a cyclonic airflow inside, bringing the fire to between 1,200 and 1,400 degrees.

Monday, officials fired up the 55-gallon portable pyre for the first time and turned a pound of marijuana and some prescription meds into smokin' ash.

Well, actually, it's a filtered, smoke-free system, but you get the picture.



*PHOTO: Sterling Deputy Police Chief Jeff Mohr divides the drugs into bundles for the incinerator. The drugs need to be put in paper bags to keep the delivery tray from getting plastic or glass stuck to it. (Alex T. Paschal/apaschal@saukvalley.com)*

Until the Terminator arrived, police had to send illegal drugs to State Police lab for disposal, while expired or unused prescription medication – which the public can drop off at any law enforcement agency – was sent to Chicago twice a year as part of the federal Drug Enforcement Agency's a drug take-back program.

"We had no way of destroying them ourselves," Deputy Chief Jeff Mohr said.

The DEA doesn't take liquid medication, though, and now it, too, can be incinerated here.



[Alex T. Paschal/apaschal@saukvalley.com]

The "Drug Terminator's" filtered, smoke-free system keeps toxins and smoke from being released into the air, which is probably a good thing, considering some of what was burned Thursday, like this bag of marijuana.



[Alex T. Paschal/apaschal@saukvalley.com]

Before getting the drug incinerator, the Sterling Police Department had to pay to properly dispose of seized narcotics and medication dropped off in their prescription drop box.