

Police department welcomes Drug Terminator in its war on drugs

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The Crescent City Police Department has a new tool in its ongoing war on drugs — The Drug Terminator.

Police Chief Richard Griffin told the City Council at its meeting Sept. 21 about the acquisition, which was donated by RX Safe Del Norte Coalition. Griffin said during meetings with the nonprofit, a need was discussed regarding the disposal of narcotics seized by the police department and other law enforcement agencies in Del Norte County and then adjudicated through the court process.

“Full credit goes to Sgt. Leslie Gill, who mentioned the product he used to use down in Blue Lake. It was an excellent product he researched, and we tried to get it put in our budget,” Griffin said. “But it cost just under \$5,000 and it went out the window for us with the COVID issues that came.”

That’s when RX Safe Del Norte Coalition stepped in and donated the funds to purchase the unit.

The Drug Terminator is a 55 gallon drum, converted into a cyclonic barrel burner, that is lightweight and mobile, Griffin said, that can easily dolly from storage indoors to use outside. On top is a whirlwind device to make the wood or charcoal fuel burn really hot. Griffin said after burning the drugs, it leaves behind completely sterilized ash that can be thrown away in with regular trash.

“That’s one of the best things I can say about it, is it is no longer hazardous material at that point,” Griffin said.

Jermaine Brubaker of the RX Safe Del Norte Coalition told the city council the Drug Terminator will not only help the CCPD save money disposing of illegal drug seizures and help them destroy backlogged drugs still in evidence storage, but it will also help community members dispose of personal medication.

“We know that not only is unused medication a problem within our community, when it comes to the opioid crisis, having a backlog of evidence like that just opens the door for it to get back on the street,” Brubaker said. “During the medication disposal, it costs a lot of money to get it to the DEA as well. It takes out the middle man and save money for the future.

“We can push medication disposal in the community as well, get those medicine cabinets cleaned out give them a place a go and basically cremate it,” Brubaker added.

She said RX Safe Del Norte Coalition has been working with local law enforcement, giving them narcan (a nasal spray to help reverse an opioid overdose) and fentanyl test kits. The coalition had also planned to fund travel money associated with getting drugs disposed of in other locations, sometimes as far away as Sacramento.

“When COVID came along, we had to redistribute that budget money, so this was a great partnership to bring on,” Brubaker said.

Griffin added the Drug Terminator will also be made available the other arms of law enforcement, including the sheriff’s office, California Highway Patrol and Tribal Police. He’s still researching if Pelican Bay State Prison is eligible to participate in Drug Terminator burns, or if the state has its own regulations for drug disposal.

“It’s an amazing donation. We’ve put it to immediate use,” Griffin said. “We’ve started an audit of our evidence room. We have a huge need to get rid of backlog of drugs that could have been destroyed before that are just taking up room in our evidence room.”