



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Three New Locations Added to Niagara County Pharmaceutical Drop-Box Program

ROBERT G. ORTT June 28, 2016

| ISSUE: **PRESCRIPTION DRUGS, COMBATING HEROIN AND OPIOID ADDICTION**



NORTH TONAWANDA—With the nation’s attention on an epidemic of opioid abuse, New York State Senator Robert G. Ortt—in a joint effort with several agencies of Niagara County government and the Niagara County Sheriff’s Office, the North Tonawanda Police Department, and Covanta Niagara—announced the addition of new drop-box locations for residents throughout the county to dispose of unwanted and expired drugs at this morning’s official opening of the North Tonawanda drug collection site.

Local Energy-from-Waste operator Covanta donated the three boxes and will safely destroy and convert the collected medications into clean energy at no cost to Niagara County.

“As co-chair of the Senate’s Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction, I’ve heard from those struggling with substance abuse and their families and understand the unique challenges that come with addiction. Prescription drug abuse is cutting across all demographics to affect people of all ages, ethnicities, geographic regions, and social classes,” **Senator Ortt said**. “Prevention is critically important. These prescription drop-off boxes will keep unwanted drugs out of the wrong hands, and help to curb this growing epidemic.”

Niagara County Sheriff James R. Voutour praised the effort, noting existing drop boxes were already taking large quantities of drugs out of circulation.

“The public response to our permanent drop-boxes has been tremendous,” **Voutour said**. “Since we started with our first three locations in 2014 we have collected over 8,000 pounds of unwanted medications. I’m confident with our expansion into the City of North Tonawanda, Village of Middleport and Town of Niagara that we will continue to provide safe management options for the residents of Niagara County.”

When flushed down the drain, medications can enter waterways and contaminate surface waters, having an adverse effect on drinking water and the environment. More importantly, though, unused medication in households can contribute to the growing rate of prescription drug abuse. Covanta’s **Rx4Safety** program, in collaboration with local municipalities, provides communities with a safe way to dispose of unwanted drugs, including prescription and over-the-counter drugs, at no cost to the taxpayer.

“Niagara County is watching the resurgence of drug abuse closely, and with our present national opioid crisis, it is clear that eliminating prescription narcotics from circulation must

be a priority,” said **Niagara County Legislature Majority Leader Randy R. Bradt, R-North Tonawanda**. “This provides a secure, legal disposal alternative for prescription drugs that keeps them out of the waste stream and off the streets.”

"Prescription drug abuse is a growing epidemic. At Covanta Niagara, we are proud to provide Niagara County residents with a confidential and environmentally sound way to dispose of unwanted prescription medications, avoiding potential abuse and keeping them from contaminating our water supplies," said **Kevin O’Neil, Covanta Niagara business manager**. "The addition of these three new drop-box locations will further protect the community and the environment from improper medication disposal.”

The county’s pharmaceutical collection program provides residents the opportunity to drop off old prescription drugs, expired medications and other common pharmaceuticals at already existing drop-box locations or on designated collection days. The drugs are collected from the secure box and are in turn safely destroyed at Covanta Niagara.

Drop-off points are located at the North Tonawanda Police Department, 216 Payne Ave., North Tonawanda, the Middleport Police Department, 12 Main St., Middleport, and Town of Niagara Police Department, 7105 Lockport Road, Niagara, the Lewiston Police Department, 4059 Creek Road, Lewiston and Niagara Falls Police Department, 1295 Main St., Niagara Falls, and the Niagara County Sheriff’s Office, 5526 Niagara St. Ext., Lockport.

For more information, please visit www.rethinkyourwaste.com.