

County blood supply 'wiped out'

SCRMC hosts drive to replenish before busy Labor Day weekend

BY JEANNETTA EDWARDS
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Jones County's blood supply, which was critically low, has been "wiped out" according to Beverly Clark, community relations representative for United Blood Services.

"We had two gunshot victims and a tree accident," said Clark.

With the Labor Day weekend rapidly approaching, when more than 27 million vehicles will be on the roadways, Jones County blood supplies will not be able to meet the need.

"Most people don't realize how important it is," said Linda Gatzman, community services director for South Central Regional Medical Center, "until something happens."

SCRMC will host its annual August Blood Drive to shore up the blood supply from 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. Friday, with three collection sites — the first floor conference rooms at the hospital, United Blood Service across the street from the hospital at 1215 Jefferson St., and the bloodmobile will be at the Wellness Center at 23 Mason St., from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

"This will be the drive that gets us through Labor Day," said Gatzman.

According to the American Red Cross, 95 percent of all Americans will need blood at some point in their lifetime, but only six percent of eligible donors give on a regular basis. Donating blood is safe because collec-

tion needles and bags are used only once.

Blood of all types is needed, but type O, which is the type of 37 percent of Americans, is the most common.

The Mississippi Beef Council will grill hamburgers and "big dogs" for donors, who receive patriotic T-shirts and a Chick-fil-A duffel bag and coupon. Coca-Cola Bottling will provide soft drinks.

A drawing for the grand prizes which include a Caribbean cruise, a 27 inch flat screen television, a DVD/CD player, an Olympus digital camera, a gift basket from Bath and Body, and gift certificates from Wal-Mart, Cafe La Fleur, and The Studio.

According to Gatzman, the goal is 300 donors. An employee drive will be held tonight from 10 p.m. — 4 a.m. at the hospital.

"The public can attend any of the drives," said Clark, who encourages everyone in Jones County to give.

Four machines will be available to collect "double red" from donors who have previously given "double red" cells.

Area merchants who sponsored the prizes for the blood drive are Priority One Bank, HiFi Cruisin, X-Treme Tanning & Tone Salon, Bank of Jones County, Burton's Jewelers, Trustmark National Bank, Terry Insurance, Bancorp South, AmSouth, Westridge Family Clinic, Tillery Dental Clinic.

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LAUREL LEADER - CALL
Laurel, MS

Evening Circulation - 7,494
Daily

AUGUST 17, 2004