

Evans hospital's scavenger hunt promotes recycling, sustainability



By Jeff Troth, Medical Department Activity Public Affairs

SCAVENGER HUNT QUESTION #7, FILL IN THE BLANK: The Fort Carson _____ program has three goals: Waste, Energy and Water [conservation].

This is just one of 10 scavenger hunt questions Evans Army Community Hospital staff and patients answered during its annual sustainability celebration June 4.

The Sustainability Celebration was held in the hospital's dining facility. Display boards advertised what the hospital and post are doing to save resources, such as recycling, solar power and using eco-friendly solutions to clean the hospital. The scavenger hunt consisted of 10 questions taken from the sustainability display boards.

"Visitors and staff members had to look at each of the displays to answer the questions," said Lt. Col. Sean Farley, EACH's chief of logistics. "Even if they didn't spend a lot of time looking in detail, they still saw a little bit of everything we have going on from energy conservation to green transportation."

Those completing the hunt received an EACH sustainability water bottle or coffee mug.

"In the past we found that if you just setup displays people never really look at them," Farley said. "The free mug catches people's interest and the scavenger hunt was a way to teach them and hopefully they take away one or two things that they didn't already know."

The displays highlighted many of the hospital's achievements: it recycles 3,500 pounds of paper per week, reprocessing single use devices saves \$150,000 each year, and the staff's green transportation is impacting the environment -- 14 percent drive low emission vehicles, putting the hospital above the Army's goal of 10 percent.

"Probably the biggest thing I learned from the scavenger hunt is that solar power saves about \$60,000 a year for Fort Carson," said Don Slider, a hospital pharmacy tech supervisor. "Our

department does pretty good on recycling, we go through a ton of plastic medicine bottles and we recycle all of them. We also recycle a lot of paper.”

Evans has numerous initiatives that help the environment and save the hospital money. By optimizing Biomedical Service Agreements, the hospital saved \$389,000. Reducing the number of cleaning products and converting to eco-friendly products saved \$32,000. All these efforts added up to huge sustainability dividends noted Farley, “Last year we saved almost \$2 million through sustainability initiatives.”

The hospital Sustainability Committee is not content sitting on these laurels and is continually looking for more ways to save the hospital resources and money. One new initiative is replacing the incandescent light bulbs in the parking lot with LED lights, which use six times less power. To help reduce emissions and help with parking problems, the hospital is looking at starting a car pool program. One proposal is for an office resupply program where sections can bring their excess office supplies to a central location from which others can retrieve them for free. And, Farley is also planning on having more new water fountains that refill water bottles installed throughout the hospital. “Those have been extremely popular and save a lot of wasted water,” he said.

The answer to the scavenger hunt question – The Fort Carson _____ program has three goals: Waste, Energy and Water – is “Net Zero.” This is a program the Army began in 2011 to conserve resources and consume only as much energy and water as they produce and eliminate solid waste to landfills.

“Like Fort Carson’s efforts, we at Evans hospital are striving to meet the Army’s Net Zero initiative,” Farley said. “We want to recycle everything we use and create no extra waste.”



Staff and patients look for the answers about recycling during the Evan's Sustainability Celebration scavenger hunt. (Photo by Jeff Troth)