

Around Town

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By Billy Ray McKelvy

De Queen Mayor

Area residents can get a flu shot for free by participating in a mass inoculation exercise on Friday, Nov. 17.

Flu shots will be given from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Sevier County Fairgrounds on south Rockefeller Street in De Queen. The Sevier County Health Unit has 2,000 doses of flu vaccine which can be used during this drill. There is no shortage of vaccine this year so there is no need to arrive early and wait in line for hours to get a flu shot.

There is no cause for alarm or panic. This exercise is intended to determine whether a mass inoculation would be possible in the event of pandemic flu. In case of a flu outbreak, keeping people separated would be one method of slowing the spread of disease. The drill on Friday will test whether it is possible to have a drive-through clinic so that people can receive vaccinations without mingling with others. Patients will remain in their vehicle while the flu shot is given.

Police and fire department personnel will be on hand to direct traffic. Drivers will enter on the south side of the show building and then drive through the livestock barn where paperwork will be completed and shots given. Traffic will back up on Rockefeller Avenue and Coulter Drive. Vehicles will exit west through the fairgrounds and come back to Ninth Street on Philip Cox Boulevard.

Anyone who will be receiving a flu shot is asked to wear short sleeves to speed the process.

This exercise is a way to practice the most efficient method to vaccinate large numbers of people, should it be necessary in the future.

Anyone willing to participate in this exercise will receive a free flu shot for their time and trouble.