

A ton for 60 inches: Alton Refrigeration raffles a TV to reward food donations

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON - One local business owner partnered with more than 15 others to help alleviate the need of the **Crisis Food Center** this year in their mission to feed all those in need.

Bill Crane, owner of **Alton Refrigeration**, placed a 60-inch Samsung television, valued at approximately \$1,000, as a prize in a raffle. Tickets, however, could only be attained through a donation of four or more food items at various barrels located at several

businesses throughout the Riverbend. For every four items of food, Crane said the person making the donations received a ticket. Through this effort, Crane said he and the other businesses were able to collect more than 1,700 pounds of food for the center. Continued donations after the television was raffled on Dec. 29, 2016, raised that number to around 2,000 pounds - a ton of food.

"We came pretty close to 2,000 pounds, which was 2,000 pounds they didn't have before," Crane said.

Crane, who volunteers at the Crisis Food Center every Friday afternoon, said he and other community leaders were working toward establishing another project like it again. He said the project would have more traction next time, because he intended on starting it much earlier.

"We started pretty shortly beforehand in November," he said. "We're probably going to make some changes in the program, but it was pretty successful given the time span."

Volunteering at the center is a group effort, Crane said. He works with a large group of people to assemble boxes, which are given to residents in need across the area based on family size. Crane said the effort is one of a large group, stating no one volunteering does it by themselves.

"Some people volunteer a lot and are there every day," he said. "People in need can come in once a month or so, depending on the size of the family. They receive a box full of various food items. They try to make it a balanced food list, so they have a variety as well as a healthy selection. They include soups, vegetables, bread, meat and various other items donated by people."

The Crisis Food Center is overwhelmed with donations around the holidays, Crane said. Groups such as the Boy Scouts and others pour food into the center in November, but that food is usually depleted by the spring months, Crane said. He said this project was a way to give the Crisis Food Center an abundance for later in the season.