



By Jan Rahn

Managing Editor

The recent Red Cross Bloodmobile held in Grant last week was especially successful because two persons who showed up to give blood qualified to become “double red cell donors.”

Having given blood for years, Ken Hutsell met qualifications for the first time to be a double red cell donor.

Donating double red cells is similar to a whole blood donation, except a special machine is used to allow donors to safely donate two units of red blood cells during one donation while returning their plasma and platelets to them.

Whole blood donations contain red blood cells, platelets, plasma and white blood cells. Red blood cells are the most frequently used blood component and are needed by almost every type of patient requiring transfusion. Those who meet certain criteria for double red cell donation allows them to safely donate two units of red cells during one appointment as an automated donation process. It is as safe as whole blood donation.

During the process, blood is drawn from one arm and drawn through a sterile, single-use needle set to a machine. The machine separates and collects two units of red cells and then safely returns the remaining blood components, along with some saline, back to the donor through the same arm.

Double red cell donation may be ideal for those who are extremely busy, yet committed to donating blood and who are an eligible type O, A negative or B negative donor.

Each procedure lets a donor give more of the product that is needed most by patients.

Double red cell donation takes about 20-30 minutes longer than a whole blood donation and can be done every 112 days.

Donors have all of their platelets and plasma returned to them along with some saline. They don't lose the liquid portion of their blood and may feel more hydrated after their donation.

A smaller needle is used in the double red cell collection process, so donors may find it more comfortable than whole blood donation.