

## 633 Pounds of Food Collected in November 2010 Drive

MILLINOCKET - Six hundred and 33 pounds of food was collected last week during the food drive sponsored by St. Martin's non-denominational Food Pantry on November 11th at Pangburn's Family IGA in Millinocket.

The bulk of the donations consisted of canned goods and cereals. In addition, thoughtful donors also gave nearly \$300 in cash during the drive, plus a turkey and two hams.



St. Martin's Food Pantry volunteers, left to right, David Oliver, Shirley Oliver, Anne Martin, and Melvin Martin.

One particular gentleman stood out in the volunteers' minds. He approached the volunteers, asked what was needed, ducked into the IGA, and came out with a brimming shopping cart filled with three 10-pound bags of potatoes, canned goods, one turkey, two hams and \$60 in cash. He explained his actions away by saying he had not donated in quite a while.

Volunteers also praised grocery store owner Al Pangburn who, just before the drive concluded, sent out from the store five large boxes of canned goods. Pangburn, the volunteers said, does a lot not only for the food pantry, but the community as well.

These donations of non-perishable foods represented almost double the amount collected a year ago during a similar food drive. That was a good news for the food pantry, which serves the needy people of the Katahdin Area. Those plentiful donations helped to restock the pantry shelves which were "very low, nearly bare" as one volunteer described the pantry's situation.

Despite the success of the drive, the food pantry still needs such things as mayo, marshmallows and shampoo. And, as of last weekend, only one five pound bag of sugar remained on the shelves.

In a three-month period between August and October the food pantry distributed 1.45 tons of food. And as winter approaches demands on the food pantry are anticipated to increase significantly. Contributing to this increase is: the 14.6 unemployment rate for the Katahdin Region, the highest in the state; the fact that 16 percent of Maine households are on food stamps; and nearly 38 percent of enrolled Maine students in K-12 are eligible for the lunch program, including Stearns High School where 50 percent of the student population is eligible for reduced price lunches.