

PILLOWS

FROM A1

ty's website, the Cold War pillows are fetching about \$27 each for the county.

John Marquardt, of Tigerton, snatched up six of them, saying that pillows of such high quality likely would cost much more elsewhere, assuming they were available anywhere else. The back story of how the pillows ended up in Shawano

FYI

To purchase one of Shawano County's vintage Cold War pillows, click on the link at www.co.shawano.wi.us/news_and_announcements.

also makes for an amusing story to tell visitors, Marquardt said.

"It was pretty interesting," he said. "And we really like the pillows."

Despite spending decades in wooden crates, the pillows are sealed in individual plastic bags and show no sign of deterioration.

Each tagged Federal Civil Defense Administration, they were found in crates dated 1957 and marked "C.D. Emerg. Hosp.," which stands for civil defense emergency hospital. With seven crates containing 20 pillows each, the county inventory totaled 140 pillows, of which about 40 have been sold so far.

The Civil Defense Administration was created in the 1950s amid escalating public fears of war with the Russian-led Soviet Union. From coast to coast, communities turned their attention to military and civilian readiness.

Eric Green, founder of the Civil Defense Museum in Texas, said the U.S. government envisioned wartime evacua-

tion of major cities, with throngs of civilians fleeing to the countryside and needing medical care. The government planned for emergency makeshift hospitals by equipping places like Shawano with surgical equipment, portable toilets, lanterns and other supplies.

Much of the material has long since been thrown away or donated to charity, Green said, but stockpiles occasionally turn up in odd places.

Of Shawano's feather pillow inventory, Green said: "That's really neat that the stuff is still usable after all these years. It's really surprising it's still out there."

Dreher said the county periodically cleans house just like everyone else. He estimated that the crates of pillows had been sitting in the courthouse attic for at least 15 years.

Although the pillows never were used for their intended purpose, Dreher said government officials in the 1950s made sure that these relics were built to last — and would remain ready to use for a very long time.

"It was planned that way," he said. "They knew this stuff was going to sit around in a box."