

Warm Springs tribe approves marijuana sales project

By Gosia Wozniacka
Associated Press

PORTLAND (AP) — Members of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs have approved a plan to build a facility to grow marijuana on their reservation in Central Oregon and sell it at tribe-owned stores outside the reservation.

The vote comes a year after a U.S. Department of Justice policy indicated tribes could grow and sell pot under the same guidelines as states that opt to legalize. The tribe is one of the first in the country to enter the pot business.

Tribal officials said about 80 percent of tribal voters favored the proposal. More than 1,400 of the 3,300 eligible voters turned out for the referendum Thursday.

Warm Springs' plan is to build a 36,000-square-foot greenhouse to grow and process the cannabis. Officials expect the project will create more than 80 jobs. Net revenue from the three proposed tribal-owned retail stores in the Portland and Bend areas would top \$26 million annually.

The proposal doesn't change the law that bans

marijuana possession on the reservation, about 90 miles southeast of Portland.

Many tribes have opposed legalization and marijuana sales, due to the potential to compound alcohol and drug problems already present on reservations. Some tribes, like the Yakama Nation in Washington state, outright banned marijuana.

But at least a half-dozen tribes this year have legalized marijuana on their reservations or have pursued marijuana projects, hoping to bolster their tribal economies with the revenue.

Last month, the Squaxin Island Tribe in Washington state opened what is believed to be the first retail marijuana store on a reservation. The tribe isn't growing the marijuana but is buying it wholesale from the state-regulated system used by the recreational pot industry.

Washington allows for medical and recreational marijuana use, and the Squaxin entered into a compact with the State that sets guidelines for taxing pot sales. Another Washington tribe, the Suquamish, has also signed a tribal compact with the state for a marijuana

store. That store is still under construction.

Other tribes are also considering the move. The Passamaquoddy Tribe in Maine signed a letter of intent in September with a medical marijuana management and consulting company to build a cultivation facility on tribal land. The tribe wants to use the facility to make industrial hemp, not marijuana, though officials said they might consider expanding operations when laws around marijuana change.

And leaders of the Omaha Tribe in Nebraska are considering land in western Iowa for growing marijuana. That's after tribal members approved three referendums last month giving the Tribal Council the authority to legalize marijuana for medicinal and recreational use and to grow plants for industrial hemp. The tribe will launch a study that will examine whether the business would make financial sense.

Some tribes have faced challenges in the pot business — especially those within states where marijuana isn't legal.

The Flandreau Santee Sioux in South Dakota — a state where both medical and recreational marijuana

is prohibited — decided in November to burn its cannabis crop amid fears it could face a federal raid. The tribe was the first tribal nation to legalize recreational marijuana and had big plans to open the country's first marijuana resort — complete with smoking lounge, nightclub, bar and private rooms for medical marijuana patients — on its reservation north of Sioux Falls.

Tribal officials said the main challenges centered on whether the tribe could sell marijuana to non-Indians, along with issues over where the seed used for planting originated. The tribe vowed to move forward with its operation in the future.

In October, federal agents raided the Menominee Nation's reservation in Wisconsin, a state where

marijuana is illegal, eradicating 30,000 cannabis plants. Tribal leaders said the plants were intended for research into growing hemp, but authorities believed the tribe was growing pot. The Menominee Nation has since sued two federal agencies over the raid.

And this summer in northern California, where medical marijuana is legal, federal authorities raided the tribal cannabis operations of the Alturas and Pit River Indian rancherias, with agents seizing 12,000 marijuana plants and some processed marijuana.

The regional U.S. attorney's office said in a statement that the two neighboring tribes planned to distribute the pot off tribal lands and the large-scale operations may have been financed by a foreign third party.



**Award-Winning
Home Builder & Renovator**

541-549-1575 • LaredoConstruction.com

Maintenance • Repairs • Insurance Work CCB#194489



RE/MAX[®]
REvolution
new solutions better results

*Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year.*
From all of us at Re/Max



237 E. Black Butte Ave. Sisters, OR 97759 1,508 sf 3 bd 2.5 ba .13 ac. \$269,500 MLS#201509316 	12960 Hawks Beard #44 BBR, OR 97759 972 sf 2 bd 2 ba \$349,000 MLS#201506965 	68979 Chestnut Drive Sisters, OR 97759 9.41 ac. Horses allowed \$235,000 MLS#201508432 	14861 Crupper Sisters, OR 97759 2,814 sf 5 bd 3 ba .62 ac. \$487,500 MLS#201509608 	1117 E. Creekside Ct. Sisters, OR 97759 2,710 sf 4 bd 2.5 ba 0.36 ac. \$499,000 MLS#201511417 					
16489 Dea Drive Bend, OR 97701 3,076 sf 3 bd 3.5 ba 5.18 ac. \$675,000 MLS#201511371 	67143 Fryrear Road Bend, OR 97701 2,150 sf 3 bd 2.5 ba 5.17 ac. \$799,000 MLS#201511216 	1121 E. Timber Pine Dr. Sisters, OR 97759 0.30 ac. Creek Frontage \$150,000 MLS#201510363 	2929 SW 32nd St. Redmond, OR 97756 0.99 ac. Redmond Heights Lot \$250,000 MLS#201511065 	69450 Green Ridge Lp. Sisters, OR 97759 4.67 ac. Nicely treed acreage \$147,700 MLS#201511260 					
 Peter Storton Principal Broker/Owner ABR, CDPE, CLHMS, CIAS	 Sandy Goodsell Principal Broker ABR, CDPE, GRI, CIAS	 Ron Roberts Broker CDPE	 Marina McCurdy Broker CDPE, CIAS	 John Ferguson Broker CDPE	 Debbie Lahey Broker CDPE, CSP, SFR	 David Miller Principal Broker, GRI Property Manager	 Jeff Dobson Broker <i>"Glad to be of service"</i>	 Jenna Silva Broker	 Terry Kotal Office Manager

Licensed Brokers in the State of Oregon  