

Brown to Trump: Hands off our pot biz

ANDREW SELSKY
ASSOCIATED PRESS



Kate Brown

The states that have legalized recreational marijuana — a multi-billion-dollar business — don't want to hear the federal government talk about a crack-down. Oregon Gov. Kate Brown says she wants Oregonians left alone to "grow these jobs."

In Oregon alone, that's roughly 12,500 jobs, said economist Beau Whitney of Portland, adding that he is making a conservative estimate. Oregon's attorney general said she would be duty-bound to fight to protect the state's marijuana industry.

U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions has said his department is reviewing a Justice Department memo that gives states flexibility in passing marijuana laws and noted "it does remain a violation of federal law to distribute marijuana throughout any place in the United States, whether a state legalizes it or not." White House spokesman Sean Spicer predicted stepped up enforcement.

Underscoring how the marijuana in-

dustry is pushing job growth in Oregon, the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, which regulates and licenses the state's recreational marijuana industry, says it has over 12,640 applications for marijuana worker permits. It has also received 2,174 marijuana license applications, with over half coming from would-be producers and the rest mostly from those seeking to set up as retailers, processors, wholesalers and laboratories. It had activated 943 licenses by Tuesday.

Marijuana shops are prevalent in many Oregon cities. In the countryside, marijuana greenhouses are not uncommon.

"We now have a nascent, somewhat successful industry," Brown said in an interview Tuesday with The Associated Press and a freelance journalist. "These are good paying jobs. It's a pretty diverse business community."

In January alone, recreational marijuana sales in Oregon were over \$20 mil-

lion, with medical marijuana generating about \$2.8 million more, the OLCC said.

In Oregon, Washington state and Colorado, marijuana tax revenues totaled at least \$335 million in either the last calendar year or the last fiscal year.

Whitney, who has been involved in several marijuana businesses and has advised state government, estimates that workers in the marijuana industry in Oregon earn a total of \$315 million per year. That's based on workers earning an average of \$12 per hour. He noted that the wage scales vary widely, with harvesters earning less than processors and chemists. Their wages are pumped back into the local economies.

If the Trump administration moves against legalized recreational marijuana, it would be going against its own objectives, Oregon's governor said.

"This administration very clearly wants to grow the economy and create jobs, and the other piece that they want is to have the states be the laboratories of democracy," Brown said. "There is no better type of laboratory than the initiative process, and voters in Oregon and

Washington and California and Alaska and Nevada, and there's a few other states, have voted to legalize marijuana. On the West coast alone, that's 49 million people."

Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum indicated she would go to court to protect those jobs. Currently, the Cole Memorandum, which provides guidance for federal marijuana enforcement, restricts it to a few areas, including preventing distribution to minors and preventing marijuana from being transported from pot-legal states to other states. Under the Cole Memorandum, states where marijuana is legal have been largely left alone.

"If the Cole memorandum is pulled, or replaced with other guidance, we would evaluate it immediately," Rosenblum said in a recent interview with AP. "Possibly if we felt we had a basis, we would push back against that, because we have a burgeoning industry here, very successful so far with some bumps in the road ... so that would be important for the attorney general to take a stand."

Parenting workshop set on teens and social media

CHRISTENA BROOKS
SPECIAL TO THE APPEAL TRIBUNE

SILVERTON — Molalla parents Willy and Cindy Fincher didn't know how deep their 17-year-old daughter's double life on the Internet went until she snuck away from an aunt's house to meet a boy she'd chatted with online.

"She could've been sex-trafficked ... it was so dangerous ... her mindset was so bad," Cindy Fincher said.

From that rock-bottom point, the Finchers unwound their daughter's four years of "horrifying" experiences online that had started innocently with simple Internet games. She is now almost 21 and healthy, her mother said.

The experience spurred the family to change their parenting style, explore the world online and to set enforceable limits on social media.

Bringing 20 years experience working with youth and five years as a Certified Prevention Specialist, Cindy Fincher will facilitate a free two-hour workshop titled "How to Set Enforceable Limits and Social Media" for parents at the Silverton Community Center on Wednesday, March 8.

The free workshop is 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the center, 421 S. Water St.

"Social media is not going away," Fincher said. "I am going to focus on how to create boundaries. We'll also talk about devices — what are the safest devices and why — and what apps you can put on those devices."

The workshop is sponsored by Silverton Together, along with Children's Trust Fund of Oregon and Oregon Together. It's free, but organizers ask attendees to register ahead by calling 503-873-0405 or emailing janh@wavecable.com.

Oregon's state parks shatter visitation record

ZACH URNESS
STATESMAN JOURNAL

For the fourth year in a row, Oregon's state park system attracted a record number of visitors.

Officials estimated there were 51.7 million visits to the state's parks, historic sites, waysides and natural areas in 2016.

An additional 2.7 million camper nights were recorded at the 57 sites where people can camp.

Both numbers are records, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department spokesman Chris Havel said.

"The upside is that we're serving more people than ever before — and seeing more smiles than ever before," Havel said in an interview earlier this year. "At the same time, we're having problems keeping up with crowding, trash, and the wear and tear on parks."

Oregon's state park system has broken its own record every year since 2013. The previous record for day use visits was 48.4 million, recorded in 2015.

In terms of percentages, the biggest jumps have been in the Columbia River Gorge and Central Oregon areas, Havel said. However, the largest raw numbers come from the Oregon Coast, where visits increased to 28.6 million, up from 21.4 million in 2011.

One possible reason for the increase is weather. Spring of 2015 and '16 brought some of the warmest in state history, leading to 20 percent increases in visitation during April.

OPRD is taking steps to address the increase at parks facing the biggest issues.

At Smith Rock State Park, where visitation jumped from 401,212 in 2009 to 744,380 in 2016, officials are revising the park's master plan with a focus on how to deal with the new visitors. They're considering everything from expanding the parking lot to instituting a limited entry system that would cap the number of people allowed to visit.

"Everything is on the table right now," park manager Scott Brown said in an interview earlier this year. "On busy weekends, we have parking overflowing into our neighbor's yards, extremely long lines at restrooms and an overflowing septic system, and a lot of issues with our first-come, first-served campground."

The increasing crowds also factor into OPRD's budget. Havel said a priority for the department is rebuilding its field staff — hiring more park rangers.

"People may be under the impression parks don't take much work to operate," Havel said. "(But) keeping it clean, maintaining facilities and helping people directly and through programs takes a well-trained team."

Zach Urness has been an outdoors writer, photographer and videographer in Oregon for eight years. He is the author of the book "Hiking Southern Oregon" and can be reached at zurness@statesmanjournal.com or (503) 399-6801. Find him on Twitter at @ZachsORoutdoors.

Daddy-Daughter Dance set to sparkle this Saturday

CHRISTENA BROOKS
SPECIAL TO THE APPEAL TRIBUNE

For the second year in a row, dads and daughters are invited to attend a dance at Silverton High School designed to "strengthen the father-daughter relationships in our community," organizers said.

Silverton Rotary's second annual Daddy-Daughter Dance will run from 6 to 9 p.m. on Saturday, March 11, and this year's theme is "Moonlight Masquerade."

The event is open to girls who are eighth grade and under and their fathers or father figures. It will feature a live DJ, dancing, face painting, crafts and games and food.

Tickets are \$30 per father-daughter couple and \$10 for each additional daughter. The proceeds go toward funding the Rotary Club's scholarship program for local high school graduates. Those interested can buy tickets online at SilvertonDDD.com or in person at Country Financial, at 204 W. Main Street in Silverton.

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