

Appeal Tribune

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Allowing marijuana businesses a sticky proposition

Bill Poehler
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Thorin Thacker said he didn't intend to get into the marijuana retail business.

He was the mayor of Mill City in 2016 when voters in cities were allowed to choose whether they would allow marijuana businesses after the substance was legalized for recreational use in Oregon.

Mill City voters chose 53% to 46% to not allow such businesses. In the same

election, voters in neighboring Gates voted to allow them.

After leaving office in 2017, Thacker and a business partner opened Canyon Cannabis in Gates within view of Highway 22, the only dispensary on the highway between Salem and Bend.

But after the business burned down in the Labor Day wildfires of 2020, he is advocating for voters in Mill City on Nov. 2 to reconsider their stance and allow marijuana-related businesses.

Also in the special election, voters in the Stayton Rural Fire District are being

asked to increase their property taxes to pay for nine additional full-time firefighters and emergency medical technicians.

Ballots for the election will be mailed to voters Oct. 13. The Marion and Linn County elections offices will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Nov. 2 to accept ballots.

Mill City marijuana

Voters in Oregon chose to legalize recreational marijuana in 2014, but cit-

ies and counties are permitted to decide whether to allow retail sales in their communities.

In the November election, voters in Mill City will choose whether to allow dispensaries to sell marijuana for medical and recreational purposes, as well as manufacturing and production of marijuana, in their city.

Canyon Cannabis's Gates location was a total loss in the wildfires, and very little of it was insured or insurable –

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A PATCH OF FALL



Kyler Miholer looks for a pumpkin at Greens Bridge Gardens in Jefferson. The farm kicked off fall with a u-pick pumpkin patch, corn maze and other activities. PHOTOS BY ABIGAIL DOLLINS/STATESMAN JOURNAL

7 pumpkin patches and corn mazes in the Mid-Valley

Whitney Woodworth
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

The mid-Willamette Valley has a plethora of pumpkin patches, including:

Bauman's Farm & Garden

For years, crowds have flocked to Bauman's Farm for the annual Harvest Festival, with features mazes, a massive pumpkin patch, farm animals, rides, and apple cider donuts.

When: Harvest Festival hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. until Oct. 30.

Where: 12989 Howell Prairie Road NE, Gervais.

For more information: 503-792-3524, baumanshf.com

Beal Pumpkin Patch

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Salo Crowther, 11, looks at chickens at Greens Bridge Gardens.

Don't expect a call from a contact tracer in some places

Bill Poehler
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

If you had dinner with a friend who turned out to have COVID-19, don't expect a call from a contact tracer.

At least not in some places in Oregon.

Marion and Lane counties said they have had so many new cases recently that their public health departments are in 'surge protocols,' meaning they only contact people who are exposed in workplace outbreaks and congregate care settings.

According to the Oregon Health Authority, sporadic

cases of COVID-19 – ones that weren't traced back to a known case – have skyrocketed since early in the summer.

In the most recent week reported by the OHA, the week of Sept. 11, there were more than 10,000 sporadic cases in the state. There were about 1,000 the week of June 26.

Marion County has so many cases of COVID-19 that the county's public health division is primarily tracking cases in congregate care settings like nursing homes and workplace outbreaks, according to Marion County Health & Human Services spokesper-

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Marion County fails to update crime data tracking system

Dianne Lugo
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

The data that could tell the Marion County Sheriff's Office whether hate crimes are on the rise, or when a certain neighborhood is experiencing a rash of burglaries is sitting in a shared computer drive, unreadable and unusable by state and national law enforcement.

It is one of a handful of agencies in the state and the country that missed the FBI deadline to switch to an improved method of reporting crime data to Oregon State Police and federal officials.

The FBI gave them four years to get it done. "They can still submit their data to OSP, but it's just going to be saved on a shared drive and nothing will be done with that data because ... there's no way to translate that data into something readable," Meloni Morrison, Interim UCR Program Coordinator at Oregon State Police, said.

Transition to a newer system

For years, the FBI has collected and provided crime statistics nationwide through its Uniform Crime Reporting Program relying on the traditional Summary Reporting System to collect and aggregate a monthly tally of crimes.

The National Incident-Based Reporting System, first introduced in 1988, was implemented "to improve the overall quality of crime data collected by law enforcement," according to the FBI website.

The newer system allows law enforcement to report more details about each crime incident. It also allows agencies to report on separate offenses within the same incident, such as when someone is assaulted in the midst of a robbery.

The newer system also collects additional information on victims, known offenders, relationships between victims and offenders, arrestees, property involved, and day and time of the crime.

In 2016, the FBI gave law enforcement agencies a deadline to transition to the newer system.

"SRS sunsetted January of 2021 and we were encouraging all SRS or non-reporting agencies to go to NIBRS or ONIBRS and start reporting that way," Morrison said. "Marion County was unable to meet that deadline."

OSP "did everything we could to get them to meet the deadline and since they were unable to, we just save their data and don't do anything with it," she said. "There's nothing we can do with it."

In a 2016 memo about the transition, former FBI Director James B. Comey cited "recent events" that "underscored the importance of having informed conversations about policing and crime policy."

Those conversations concluded with the decision to discontinue SRS reporting.

"Once complete, the FBI will have faster access to more robust data that is necessary to show how safe our communities are and to help law enforcement and municipal leaders better allocate resources to prevent and combat crime," Comey said. "Through the NIBRS, law enforcement agencies can be more transparent and accountable to the communities they serve."

With a fuller context of crimes, the statistics are vital for more informed policing. The data is also necessary for the FBI and other local agencies to spot trends and respond.

Marion County among the few

Last year, fewer than 10,000 of nearly 18,000 participating agencies submitted data via the newer system.

In Oregon, 207 of the 234 law enforcement agencies submitted data to the FBI for its 2020 Hate Crimes Report, fewer than in 2019. Most of those were very small communities, although Lane County Sheriff's Office also did not submit data.

According to OSP data, Marion County appears to be the only Oregon agency still submitting under the old format.

U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland has charged FBI officials across the country with identifying the agencies that did not provide their data, special agent in charge of the Portland Field Office Kieran L. Ramsey said when announcing the new re-

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