

Business & Ag

Proposed marijuana business owner says plans are delayed

• GROUP WORKING UNDER NAME "EASTERN OREGON FINANCIAL TRUST" PLANS BALLOT INITIATIVE

BY KERRY McQUISTEN
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Blue Christian Ontiveros-Winterhawk was a self-admitted troublemaker in his youth, raised from ages seven to 16 in Baker City up Old Auburn road.

After years away making good in Portland and New York City working primarily in the events coordination industry, and for a museum or theater here and there, Ontiveros-Winterhawk says he plans to return to the area to open up both medicinal and recreational marijuana operations.

He believes he and his business partners have a model in mind that will allow him to do "something very beneficial for the community."

So far, County Commissioners, local law enforcement, most Baker County voters in the last election and the majority of the City Council disagree with his outlook.

"Cannabis isn't just coming. It's already here," he counters. "I'm already here."

Ontiveros-Winterhawk is working with a Portland-based partner, Matthew Chambers, and three undisclosed financial investors, forming Eastern Oregon Financial Trust—a business that will be, but has not yet been, filed with the Oregon Secretary of State as an LLC, according to Ontiveros-Winterhawk.

After working as a medical marijuana grower in the Portland area for one year three years ago, and then again for the past year in Portland, Ontiveros-Winterhawk began making various treks to Baker City over the last couple months. He met with City Manager Mike Kee and attended a City Council meeting or two to learn more about the current ordinances against and attitudes surrounding marijuana use.

With the City of Baker City's pot ban ordinance in place, soon to be updated and replaced with a new one, as well as a Baker County ordinance recently enacted, Ontiveros-Winterhawk quickly came to one conclusion: "Now is not

the time," he said.

Instead, he and his associates plan to back off a step and research the process involved in collecting enough signatures to place a referendum or initiative on the ballot in hopes that local voters will overturn both those City and County laws.

Ontiveros-Winterhawk believes that the prime opposition to his business is the fear of lost federal grant monies, which he believes is unfounded. "If they take it away here because of that, wouldn't they have to take it away everywhere in Oregon?" he ponders.

Baker City Police Chief Wyn Lohner has a different point of view. Said Lohner, "Although losing Federal dollars is of concern, not just here but throughout the state, in my opinion that is not even close to the biggest concern. My biggest concern is the safety of our community as a whole, but especially our youth. Anytime a product is made more available, the number of users will increase. That means more kids going to school under the influence, more driver's operating motor vehicles under the influence and more interactions between citizens under the influence of a psychoactive drug."

Acting on the belief that the votes will swing his way, Ontiveros-Winterhawk says he has scouted the area and "picked out properties" within Baker County. "The locations are vital to selling the idea," he said.

Ontiveros-Winterhawk has his eye on a commercial building in the price range of \$100-150K within the city limits and a commercial grow site on the outskirts, but still within the county. His loose guess is that up to about half a dozen people, including himself, would be employed by his business.

When asked directly if his plan is all about the money, Ontiveros-Winterhawk responded, "No. Oh God, no. There's not as much money in it for me as people would think, and this is hard back-breaking work. If I end up making four grand a month, it'll be great. It's about the science and the industry."

Ontiveros-Winterhawk talks easily of pot-growing terms such as clones, oils, crop-loss and hydroponic schematics.

In response to recent studies cited by a neurosurgeon recently featured



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

Blue Christian Ontiveros-Winterhawk spoke Tuesday about his future marijuana business plans.

on the Steve Crowder web site, which show an average of an eight-point drop in I.Q. when using pot once per week as well as pre-frontal lobe damage, Ontiveros-Winterhawk said he believes, "It's all about knowing limits, knowing self. Cannabis affects everyone differently." He added that scientific studies have been limited and he thinks anecdotal evidence largely outweighs them still.

Ontiveros-Winterhawk said after his "proto-business" is past the research and fact-finding stages, and if it becomes legally clear to operate within the county, he would like to release a "tailor-made" business plan for Baker City, complete with a public outreach portion to address concerns about children having increased access to the substance.

"Nothing changes for them," he said. "I know for the public this sounds like a scary schedule one drug, but for underage kids nothing changes at all. All the good reasons to stay away from it are still valid. There's already cannabis aplenty in this town. We want people to not be scared of us, and to contribute to the community."

Lohner said, "How many parents feel they can effectively set limits on what their children consume; whether it is television, soda pop or cookies? How many adults can effectively set limits for themselves, once they are under the influence of any intoxicant? I do agree that marijuana will have varying effects on people; but when you add varying degrees of potency (THC) and varying degrees of exposure to the drug, it equates to a community safety threat."

Ontiveros-Winterhawk also finds little validity in

the assertion that marijuana is a gateway drug. He said the "big three" in his mind are: alcohol, meth and cigarettes.

Lohner disagrees. "I have been involved in law enforcement for nearly 20 years now," he said, "And I can tell you I have never spoken to a user who told me that one day they just decided to try methamphetamine. It starts by showing up at a place, or living in a household, where an intoxicant is available.

Once they are exposed to that and their body feels that high, they want more. Many drug users will tell you that it then becomes a quest to get a bigger high, which is why some users start seeking more powerful drugs. I won't quote statistics, because I believe statistics can be manipulated by anyone, but in my professional observations many times marijuana is at the lower end of that escalation."

Ontiveros-Winterhawk said in his experience, marijuana is sometimes used by meth addicts to calm themselves and come off a meth high. He said, "The bigger issue in a small community for people who abuse a substance is to find out what they're missing in life."

Ontiveros-Winterhawk said, "I think it's similar to gun control. In the right hands if guns are handled well, they're a tool with a wonderful, healthy economy based around them. It's crazy people who kill people with guns, who cause the problems. Not the guns. It's the same with cannabis."

Eastern Oregon Financial Trust's path in Baker County now hinges on whether that ballot measure comes to fruition, and if it does, which way the vote swings.

— WEEKLY HAY REPORT —

Friday, August 7, 2015 — Eastern Oregon

Prices trended generally steady compared to the same quality last week. Trade activity decreased slightly this week as many producers are still busy in the field with the second cutting. Many producers have decided to hold on to their hay for now, in hopes for higher prices.

Tons	Price Range	Wtd Avg
Alfalfa — Standing		
Good 770	120.00-120.00	120.00
Alfalfa / Orchard Mix — Large Square		
Good 500	150.00-150.00	150.00
Timothy Grass — Large Square		
Good 350	170.00-170.00	170.00
Oats — Large Square		
Good 100	120.00-120.00	120.00

USDA Market News Service—AMS.USDA.gov

— CATTLE MARKET REPORT —

Wednesday, August 5, 2015

Vale, Oregon

Cattle sold through the auction: 1,319

Steer Calves

300-400#	Bulk 292.00 - 316.00	Top 322.00
400-500#	Bulk 276.00 - 307.00	Top 307.50
500-600#	Bulk 238.00 - 264.00	Top 278.00

Heifer Calves

300-400#	Bulk 264.00 - 308.00	Top 322.50
400-500#	Bulk 236.00 - 261.00	Top 272.00
500-600#	Bulk 217.00 - 246.00	Top 250.00

Yearling Steers

600-700#	Bulk 217.00 - 240.00	Top 241.00
700-800#	Bulk 206.00 - 224.00	Top 227.00
800-900#	Bulk 193.00 - 206.00	Top 207.25
900-1,000#	Bulk 185.00 - 194.00	Top 197.50

Yearling Heifers

600-700#	Bulk 204.00 - 216.00	Top 226.00
700-800#	Bulk 194.00 - 209.00	Top 210.00
800-900#	Bulk 182.00 - 194.00	Top 198.00
900-1,000#	Bulk N/A	Top N/A

Thin Shelly Cows	74.00 - 89.00
Butcher Cows	94.00 - 108.00
Butcher Bulls	96.00 - 124.00
Stock Cows Yng.	N/A
Younger Hfrts.	114.00 - 128.00
Stock Cows -	N/A

ProducersLivestock.com
541-473-3136

— LOG PRICE REPORT —

Price per 1,000 board feet: Northeast Oregon

Doug Fir	is \$415.00/mbf
White fir	is \$365.00/mb
Ponderosa Pine	is brought sold on diameter splits
6 to 11 inch dib	\$300 to \$310/MBF
12 to 17 inch dib	\$350 to \$375/MBF
18 to 23 inch dib	\$400 to \$430/MBF
24 inch plus dib	\$450 to \$500/MBF

DIB is diameter inside bark at small end of log.
MBF is thousand board feet lumber, net scale.
People interested in selling logs should call and get specific quotes from saw mills.

Courtesy of Arvid Andersen,
Andersen Forestry Consulting

— PRECIOUS METALS REPORT —

Price per ounce, USD	
Gold:	\$1123.70
Silver:	\$15.52
Platinum:	\$1000.20
Palladium:	\$625.80
Bloomberg.com	

— AG COMMODITIES —

Corn:	\$368.00/bu/USD
Wheat:	\$492.25/bu/USD
Soybeans:	\$910.00/bu/USD
Oats:	\$239.25/bu/USD
Rough Rice:	\$11.71/cwt/USD
Canola:	\$481.60 CAD/mwt
Live Cattle:	\$146.60/lb./USD
Feeder Cattle:	\$213.88/lb./USD
Lean Hogs:	\$63.38/lb./USD
Bloomberg.com	

Blue Mountain Oil upgrades

BY TODD ARRIOLA
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On Monday, former Bozeman, Montana residents and current Blue Mountain Oil, LLC General Managers Jeremy and Ashlee Yerrick finished a 13-month long process of upgrading the company's bulk facility property on 13th Street in Baker City.

Four new card lock pumps were opened officially at that location on Wednesday.

The couple was contacted in the spring of last year

by Shay Meskill, whom Jeremy met in Navy Dive School six years ago, about the possibility of managing the facility in Baker City, along with card lock systems in North Powder and Haines.

Meskill had been informed earlier that the previous owners had desired to sell their share of the company, expressing concerns about infrastructure upgrades needed, and the desire to move to Enterprise, Jeremy said.

Beginning in July of last year, Jeremy said, the

couple began overhauling the information technology (IT) and other systems at the Baker City bulk facility location, and in addition, assumed the responsibilities of operating and maintaining the established card lock facilities in North Powder and Haines, which were both also overhauled.

Jeremy, 35, a former Navy Seabee Underwater Construction Diver (he served for six years), who holds two BS degrees, and Ashlee, 32, a former chiropractor, who holds a PhD degree, "...wear many

hats" when it comes to responsibilities, according to Jeremy. "We have about 370 existing customers," Jeremy said, between their card lock and bulk sale customers.

Since the couple took over management last year, they've seen a significant increase in customer base and revenue stream, and reinvested almost all earnings towards technology upgrades to increase efficiency, Jeremy said.

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