

LB business buckles under weight of vape ban

By **LUKE WHITTAKER**
Coast River Business Journal

LONG BEACH — A Long Beach business is on the brink of closing following a statewide ban on flavored vaping products.

“It’s been devastating,” said Herb-N-Legend owner Lynda Kinnunen, standing behind an aisle of empty display cases that previously contained dozens of different vape products only weeks earlier.

“These were all vape products, all different flavors,” she said.

Kinnunen’s smoke and gift shop, located on 111 Bolstad Ave. in Long Beach, carried several varieties of the now-banned flavored vape cartridge varieties, which sold for about \$20 each.

“I sold a lot, they were about 30% of my business,” she said. “But they banned them, so I had to take them out of the store. It was all flavored vape liquids.”

Herb-N-Legend

Lynda Kinnunen, owner
111 Bolstad Ave. E, Long Beach
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Vape-related illness sparks ban

In early October, the Washington State Department of Health and the State Board of Health put an emergency ban on the sale, purchase and advertisement of flavored vapor products. The ban will extend until at least Feb. 7, 2020, but talk of a permanent ban is being considered.

The ban follows more than 2,200 cases of e-cigarette, or vaping, product use associated lung injury (EVALI) to The Centers



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Herb-N-Legend owner Lynda Kinnunen bought a beach house on the Peninsula and has operated her smoke and gift shop business in Long Beach for the past seven years, but is now considering selling her house and closing her store due to an ongoing ban in Washington on flavored vape products. “I’m probably going to move my business to Oregon, because I can’t make it here,” she said.

for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from 49 states, including 47 confirmed deaths in 25 states, as of November 20.

On a clear November afternoon, Kinnunen was the only person in the store.

“It’s a nice day, but look at my store.

This has been the result,” she said. The result has been fewer customers and slower sales, from \$2,000 days to \$200 days.

A year ago Kinnunen relocated the business to 111 Bolstad Ave., a building three times bigger than her previous location. The new space came with a higher rent, which, combined with the ban and subsequent 30% loss of business, has made Kinnunen consider relocating again.

“I’m probably going to move my business to Oregon, because I can’t make it here,” she said. “They say the ban is temporary, but I don’t see it that way. Now that they got them out they will want to keep them out.”



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