

Medical marijuana dispensaries open in Multnomah Village, Crestwood

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

A medical marijuana dispensary recently opened in Multnomah Village. Green Cottage Remedies is located in the back of the Coin Cottage at 3675 SW Troy. Owners Paul Rigby and his wife opened the dispensary in late February.

In March 2014, medical marijuana dispensaries were legalized in Oregon. So far, the Medical Marijuana Dispensary Program has approved 223 dispensary applications for operation.

Dispensaries must be registered by the Oregon Health Authority. Only a patient or caregiver who has an Oregon Medical Marijuana Program card is allowed inside.

Rigby's coin shop has been in business for over ten years. They moved into the Rose City Trophies space four years ago.

"It's a concrete bunker," Rigby explained. "It's secure and safe. It was the right business time to do this."

It wasn't an easy process, Rigby confessed. All applications must be accompanied by a one-time fee of \$4,000.

Then there was all the paperwork. The state has a list of requirements: a fully operational security system; a safe or vault; and employee training on the policies and procedures.

Rigby installed 40 cameras throughout the property and building.

The state also requires that all packaging and labeling comply with administrative rules.

Dispensaries may not be within 1,000 feet of a school or another dispensary. According to Rigby, another dispensary was due to open in the area but it was closer than 1,000 feet.

Rigby, himself, has chronic arthritis. He has been to the chiropractor and acupuncturists for years, but only was a short relief. He wanted to help himself, and others.

"When I began using marijuana oil," Rigby shared, "I felt relief for the first time."

Rigby went on to explain the benefits of medical marijuana with its distinction of having both THC, the chemical that makes one high, and cannabinoids, which actually excites the brain with no high.

According to Dr. Frances Jensen, a neuroscientist at the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine, some studies show that the use of medical marijuana has shown to help children with autism and epilepsy.

Medical marijuana has also been used for post traumatic stress syndrome, nausea, spasms, and, pain. It can help with side effects from cancer treatment.

"The oil can run as high as \$300 for a small bottle," Rigby explained, "but compare that to surgery, hospitalization, drugs, and doctor bills."

Kathy Huffman, a school psychologist who lives across the street from Cottage, brought up her concern for the dispensary at a recent neighborhood association when she saw the A-board sign out front. There wasn't much feedback.



Medical marijuana products displayed inside Green Cottage Remedies are only available for purchase to those with a physician's authorization and valid OMMP card.
(Post photo by Erik Vidstrand)

She then contacted *The Post*.

"I admit," Huffman said over the phone, "I was pretty irritated at first."

She had her son delve into city records. No permits for remodeling have been pulled since 2011.

"That alone is troubling," Huffman explained, "but furthermore, the business owner did not notify neighbors about the addition to their business."

They are not legally required to disclose business intentions. Rigby said he's been a member of the business association and hasn't heard of any concerns.

"Is this any different than opening a liquor establishment?" Huffman inquired. "There has to be a 45-day notification process. Their actions concern me about how this business will be run."

Randy Bonella, Multnomah Village Business Association representative, reported there haven't been any issues so far.

"The state can make an unannounced visit at any time," Rigby said. "They can view our videos and look over our records."

When the legalization of recreational marijuana takes effect on July, will recreational and medical marijuana services be housed under one roof?

"OLCC does not want to be responsible for the co-location of medical and recreational operations, unless the medical side is run in a manner consistent with federal guidelines," said Oregon Liquor

Control Commission chairman Rob Patridge.

Federal guidelines require that states that have legalized recreational marijuana ensure that the drug does not move into the illegal market or across state lines.

Another dispensary, Green Goddess Remedies, opened last year in Crestwood at 5435 SW Taylors Ferry Road. The building was vandalized in late February.

The electricity from the panel on 55th Avenue was turned off and the building was tagged with graffiti.

"I am sad that someone would vandalize a legitimate business within our neighborhood," John Prouty, vice-president of the Crestwood Neighborhood Association wrote on the neighborhood's listserv.

"Even if you don't agree with the business, no one has the right to do damage to another's property. Oregon voters passed laws that allow medical marijuana to be sold in our state."

Green Goddess has a good neighbor agreement with the Crestwood and Ashcreek neighborhood associations.

Since the opening of Green Cottage Remedies, neighbor Huffman has not noticed any problems. "Other than a car-clogged street and more difficult access to my driveway, there have been no other obvious problems," Huffman recently told *The Post*.

For information on the medical marijuana dispensary program, please visit www.oregon.gov/lmj.

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