

Evergreen Law Group, when business gets sticky

Jason McMillen
IVN Contributing Writer

Evergreen Law Group, whose headquarters is located in Ashland, got its start back in 2015 when Natalie Wetenhall and Robert Graham teamed up to provide their expertise in business law to businesses both local and statewide. The firm mainly tasks itself with assisting small to midsize companies and consider themselves to be specialists in cannabis law.

Wetenhall, now sole owner of Evergreen since Graham recently parted ways, said that her practice advises cannabis related businesses on a wide range of topics including business structuring and transactions, real property, employee matters, acquisitions and the establishment and protection of intellectual property, Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC)

licensing and regulatory compliance. Lastly, Evergreen can also help business owners maneuver around complicated cannabis tax laws as well as advise them with regards to justifying as many deductions as possible.

"There's not a lot of reason to stay medical at this point, given the new plant restrictions and patient restrictions," Wetenhall said, pointing out the upcoming changes for cannabis growers made by Senate Bill 1057. The bill will essentially force the majority of medical growers under OLCC control. Although Evergreen already works extensively with regards to OLCC licensing, even going so far as to say it's their bread and butter, their workload in that department will no doubt increase as people prepare to move over.

One concern that is particularly troubling to her and some of her clients is the upcoming changes to

Josephine County's Rural Planning Code. The changes, in their current state, will essentially ban the production of cannabis in Rural Residential zones. "I've got clients that have hundreds of thousands of dollars of infrastructure in place on RR5 in Josephine County," Wetenhall said, dismayed that she cannot yet advise them on the subject.

With regards to the protection of intellectual property, Wetenhall said that it's of paramount importance that certain cannabis businesses, particularly the ones who want to establish their products as a brand, to obtain a trademark at the state level. Should cannabis be legalized nationwide, an existing trademark will provide the company a solid case for establishing a federal one down the line.

Wetenhall has been practicing law for 15 years and got her start in New York City working for big

business. When she heard from a friend that Oregon was in need of business lawyers, particularly for the cannabis industry, she headed west. Shortly thereafter, she got her state license to practice law. "I've always been an advocate at heart," Wetenhall said, explaining her passion for practicing cannabis law. After a short stay in Portland she moved down to Ashland, fell in love with the area and has resided there for the past six years. Although Wetenhall primarily works with Oregonians, or people looking into starting a business in Oregon, she is also licensed to practice law in Washington and Washington D.C.

"Having the right foundation and the right structure is key to the success of the company," Wetenhall said. She further added that wise business owners should make a point to account for everything because the industry's legal climate is in a constant state of change.



Natalie M. Wetenhall

ROGUE VALLEY



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SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

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OREGON RESIDENTS URGED TO TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT EXPOSURE TO SMOKE

OHA offers tips to reduce health risks as wildfires affect many parts of state

As wildfires continue to affect many parts of the state--including most recently the Columbia River Gorge--the Oregon Health Authority is encouraging people to take steps to protect themselves from smoky air.

Poor air quality due to wildfires can cause health problems for people with chronic lung or heart conditions, the elderly, and children. Fine particles in smoke also can affect people suffering from asthma and other respiratory conditions.

"People should be aware of smoke levels in their area and avoid the places with highest concentrations," said Ann Thomas, MD, public health physician at the OHA Public Health Division. High temperatures can also increase levels of ozone, a pollutant that can irritate the lungs.

OHA offers the following smoke-prevention tips:
 -- Residents can check the current local air quality conditions on DEQ's website (oregonsmoke.blogspot.com).

Avoid outdoor activities when air quality is unhealthy and hazardous.

-- Avoid smoke either by leaving the area or by staying indoors, closing as many windows and doors as possible without letting your home overheat, and using a filter in your heating/cooling system that removes very fine particulate matter.

-- Avoid strenuous outdoor activity in smoky conditions. Those with heart or lung problems, as well as young children, are especially vulnerable.

-- People suffering from asthma or other respiratory problems should follow their breathing management plans or contact their health care providers.

For quick tips on how to protect yourself from the health effects of wildfire smoke and ash, watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mI77-oA6jxc>.

For guidance on how to protect student athletes and when to move outdoor activities indoors, watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O07jAVAVijw>.

For more information about wildfires and smoke, visit <http://www.healthoregon.org/wildfires>.

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