

Cannabis Cup



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

On Saturday, Dec. 2 Cannabis Cup attendees could sample and vote for People's Choice during the second annual Southern Oregon Harvest Cannabis Cup.

Almost 100 people attended the event that showcased 26 different flower submissions.

Selma's Cathy Foster started the event after the legalization of cannabis. "It's an exciting time now," Foster said referring to the legalization of cannabis under Measure 91.

Four trophies were awarded, Best Outdoor Flower, Best Edible, Best Concentrate and People's Choice.

The 2016 second place finisher, Bo Hiler stepped up his game this season. Hiler's flower took first place with his Valley grown Hindu Kush. Second place honors went to Stephen Fitch for his Sour Diesel harvest. Dustin Williamsom's Mango Peach took third from the judges but was the crowd favorite. Williamsom also took the People's Choice Award.

In other areas Peter Nygen took the winning trophy for his "Shatter" in the Best Concentrate division and Michelle Curtiss' brownies brought home the Best Edible honors.

Cannabis ban tabled for discussion

"The variance process is a sham," FARM's land use lawyer Ross Day said, "You guys are saying that the variance process applies. It doesn't. You're misrepresenting what a variance is and how it acts."

Jason McMillen
IVN Contributing Writer

On Nov. 29 Commissioners Lily Morgan and Dan DeYoung voted to continue deliberations regarding Ordinance No. 2017-002, which aims to regulate the production of commercial cannabis on Rural Residential (RR) land, and will reconvene for another potential vote Dec. 6. The amount of existing grow sites that will be affected by the ordinance, since most of them are Oregon Medical Marijuana Program (OMMP) farms whose location is protected under privacy laws, is currently unknown. Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) farms do not have such protections and the county has admitted on several occasions that they're not the source of citizen complaints.

The board continues to forge the amendments despite a letter from Grants Pass District Representative Carl Wilson urging the commissioners to delay the ordinance until after they've observed the effects of sweeping state regulation brought on by Senate Bill 1057 and House Bill 2198. "These two bills were titanic, totally retooling and some say destroying the OMMP as we know it.

Frankly, we don't even know how many producers will stay in business." Wilson went on to explain that OMMP farms will have to move under the OLCC's "seed to sale" and other regulations if they want to grow cannabis in quantities over 12 mature plants at a time.

DeYoung initially voted to pass the bill as written after Morgan voted to continue deliberations but Commissioner Simon Hare reminded DeYoung that he's recused himself from all political involvement on the matter and that if the vote went one to one, the ordinance would be dead in the water. After hearing this he agreed to continue deliberations.

Hare officially recused himself from all activity regarding the ordinance because of the public's perceived conflict of interest. Because his family owns Exclusive Farm Use land, some allege that the Hares would profit from the ordinance because their property would become more valuable. However, Hare maintains that his family has no plans to sell the property or to grow cannabis on it. At the Oct. 24 Administrative Workshop meeting, prior to recusing himself Nov. 1, Hare expressed his general frustration with pushing the ordinance after suggesting that it would be "a perfectly good

strategy" to automatically refer it to the voters. "I am so tired of this issue I'm almost to a point where I don't care and I'm not going to do anything on it. There are a hundred other things that I think I should be doing and this is not my sole job description."

The ordinance, in its newest iteration, mandates that commercial cannabis operations are banned on RR properties which have 5 acres or less while any RR properties greater than 5 acres may only grow at the OLCC's Micro Tier I and II levels. Micro Tier I production sites may have a maximum of 625 square feet of canopy for an indoor grow and 2,500 square feet of canopy for an outdoor grow. Micro Tier II production sites may have 626 to 1,250 square feet of canopy for an indoor grow and 2,501 to 5,000 square feet of canopy for an outdoor grow. For reference, 5,000 square feet is 2.3 percent of the total square footage of 5.01 acres. However, the ordinance does not limit any RR property, as long as they follow state, county and OMMP rules, from growing medical cannabis in amounts of up to 36 plants, 24 of which must be immature at any given time.

SEE BAN ON A-3

Ross Day, land use attorney

100 bass die mysteriously at Lake Selmac, ODFW investigates

Jason McMillen
IVN Contributing Writer

On Nov. 23, Thanksgiving Day, the Josephine County Parks Department received a report that 10 largemouth bass were found dead around the lake's dam which is currently being rebuilt. So far, as of the last estimate, more than 100 bass have mysteriously perished. No other species of fish living in the lake have been affected.

"We don't want to speculate what may or may not be the issue," Parks Director Sarah Wright said, "I do know the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has been extremely involved with the construction project. Our first thoughts is that it doesn't have anything to do with that." The ODFW maintains that low oxygen levels in the water or a toxic algae bloom are the most likely suspects but they're investigating all potential avenues for causation. Various samples, including living and dead bass, were taken by the ODFW late last week for testing and they hope to provide answers as to why this happened and how it can be avoided in the future.

Although, perhaps only circumstantial, the die off roughly coincided with the dam being opened for the first time in months. Opening the dam was a common occurrence before the construction project began. "It's really amazing timing that this started about the same time that we opened the dam," Wright said, further adding that aside from that there's no other abnormal activity taking place at the lake.

SEE FISH ON A-3



(Photo courtesy of 8Kustomtz for the Illinois Valley News)

A dead largemouth bass floats along the shore of Lake Selmac Saturday, Nov. 26.

IVHS winter concert slated

Judy Hoyle
IVN Contributing Writer

Illinois Valley High School's (IVHS) winter concert is slated for Dec. 7, 7 p.m. in the cafeteria.

There is no admission charge for the concert.

Both choral groups and the Symphonic Band will perform, including a combined grand finale.

IVHS music instructor Joshua Dargavell stated, "I'm really excited for the community to join us for this concert. It's a wonderful opportunity to support our students and appreciate their progress."

Holiday music selections include the 17 member Concert Choir performing "First Noel" and "Walking in a Winter Wonderland."

The more experienced IVHS Ensemble singing group includes 11 students who

will sing "Silent Night" and "Carol of the Bells."

Following a short intermission, the Symphonic Band will play "Let it Snow" and the "Christmas Song."

At the end of the evening, the audience will be invited to sing along as the combined student groups perform "The Little Drummer Boy," "Deck the Halls" and "We Wish You a Merry Christmas."

Dargavell said, "It's so nice for our students to see adults who enjoy singing and important for them to see that you can always sing. We want to encourage them to find other outlets to keep singing after high school and the opportunities are just going to continue to get better."

He hopes to develop both a pep band to help cheer on the football teams and other sports, as well as a larger, more formal concert group over the next few years.

IVHS basketball is gearing up for a hot season

Read about it on A-12