

# Insufficient marijuana labs may cause bottleneck

No labs are currently licensed by Oregon regulators

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**  
Capital Bureau

Oregon has no shortage of people willing to grow and sell marijuana under its regulatory system for the recently-legalized crop.

However, the state is facing a dearth of labs that can test marijuana products for the psychoactive chemical THC as well as prohibited pesticides and contaminants, as required by law.

At this point, 228 growers, 96 retailers, 38 processors, 31 wholesalers and one researcher have applied for marijuana licenses with the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, which oversees the regulatory tracking system for the crop.

The number of laboratories that have applied? Zero.

Complications and expenses, rather than a lack of interest, have prevented labo-

ratories from enrolling in the system so far, said Steve Marks, the commission's executive director.

While no existing laboratories have yet been licensed for marijuana testing, a handful have expressed interest in obtaining certification from the Oregon Health Authority, Marks said. Both agencies must approve labs for the tracking system.

### Potential bottleneck

Insufficient laboratories could prove to be a bottleneck in Oregon's marijuana regulatory system, at least initially. The system will be in "good shape" if six or seven facilities are licensed, but will face challenges with only one or two, he said.

"We're going to have enough eventually, it's just how quickly they can do it," Marks said.

Some laboratories that provide testing for industrial companies may be able to enroll

without significant changes, but smaller facilities that are already serve marijuana producers may have to undertake significant upgrades, he said.

New equipment needed to comply with testing standards can cost \$50,000 and needs to be calibrated for marijuana, Marks said. Labs will also need to train existing employees or hire more personnel to handle the added workload.

Medical marijuana dispensaries can currently sell the recreational crop from "grandfathered" grow sites, but retail marijuana sold to consumers must meet testing requirements by June.

### Need water rights

Growers who want to produce recreational marijuana for retail sales must demonstrate they have water rights to grow the crop and obtain a statement from their city or county governments attesting they meet land



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Packages of Fire OG hang on the rack at Hi in Astoria. The state is facing a dearth of labs that can test marijuana products for the psychoactive chemical THC as well as prohibited pesticides and contaminants, as required by law.

use requirements.

Producers can grow canopies of marijuana up to 10,000 square feet indoors and 40,000 square

feet outdoors, but commercial marijuana production is currently prohibited by 76 cities and 19 of Oregon's 36 counties.

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

## Dignitaries present local contractor with EPA award

By **ERICK BENGEL**  
The Daily Astorian

Al Jaques, a local independent contractor, got a pleasant surprise right in the middle of a motorcycle group's meeting at the Astoria Moose Lodge last week.

A handful of dignitaries crashed the event to present Jaques with a Phoenix Award, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's award honoring individuals and groups who turn blighted or contaminated areas into something socially useful.

Jaques served as the manager for the Astoria Sports Complex construction project, a \$10 million undertaking that wrapped up in late 2014 and transformed the Astoria Municipal Landfill on Williamsport Road into a community complex.

"I tell ya, Al was the right person to have working on this project," Astoria City Manager Brett Estes said. "He managed the whole construction project and was having to wear many hats to get the thing built and done."

Since Astoria High School's Fighting Fishermen use the site for their new home stadium, the brownfield redevelopment freed up the old high school field, John Warren Field, for Columbia Memorial Hospital's new cancer treatment center now in the works.

At a ceremony held in Chicago in September, the EPA gave the Region 10 Phoenix Award to the landfill project. Estes; former Astoria Mayor Willis Van Dusen; Astoria School Board Superintendent Craig Hoppes; hospital CEO Erik Thorsen; and Fred Stemmler, general manager of Recology Western Oregon, accepted the trophy.

But the consortium felt that Jaques deserved a trophy, too. So they ordered one specially for him.

"It was an awesome surprise," Jaques said. "Apparently, many people knew it was



Carl Earl/The Daily Astorian

Holding his Phoenix Award, Al Jaques, the project manager of the Astoria Sports Complex, listens to state Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, congratulate him over the phone held aloft by former Astoria Mayor Willis Van Dusen.

coming, but I was the last one to know."

Joined by Public Works Director Ken Cook; City Engineer Jeff Harrington; Astoria High School Athletic Director Howard Rub; and, via phone, state Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, the group stormed the North Coast ABATE motorcycle meeting to give Jaques his due publicly.

"He was just totally blown away," Jaques' partner, Linda Long, said.

"It only lasted about 20 minutes," Van Dusen said, "but it was a very memorable 20 minutes."

Van Dusen added that, while Jaques has done many great projects in Astoria, "the one that, in my opinion, is the most important, that's going to stand out more than the others, is this sports complex and the cancer center.

"And all of us involved in that teamwork effort thought that Al was our team captain," he said.

## Man arrested with drugs after pursuit, crash on U.S. Highway 30

By **KYLE SPURR**  
The Daily Astorian

A 36-year-old Long Beach, Washington, man was arrested Tuesday night after eluding police, losing control of his vehicle and crashing into a power pole on U.S. Highway 30 in the John Day area.

David Ryan Huff was initially stopped by Oregon State Police for having a taillight out at milepost 89 on Highway 30. He gave a false name and then fled from the stop.

A pursuit ensued and Huff lost control near milepost 93, where a power pole was broken.

Highway 30 was closed for about two hours due to power lines coming down and striking three other vehicles.

Huff and a passenger, Keisha Marie Ann Jones, 24, of Long Beach, were immediately arrested after the crash. Further investigation revealed Huff had Oregon and Washington warrants and was in possession of cocaine, methamphetamine and heroin, according to state police.

Jones was on post-prison supervision and her probation officer issued a detainer.

Huff is being charged with attempting to elude police with a vehicle, reckless driving, recklessly endan-



David Ryan Huff

gering another person, second-degree criminal mischief, providing false information to a police officer and possession of methamphetamine, heroin and cocaine. He is being held in custody on \$25,000 bail.

An arraignment hearing is scheduled next week.

John Day Volunteer Fire Department, Astoria Police, Clatsop County Sheriff's Office, Oregon State Department of Transportation, Pacific Power assisted the state police at the scene.

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