

# Marijuana smoking lounges could be next in Oregon

By **PARIS ACHEN**  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Smoking lounges could still be the next trend for Oregon's recreational marijuana market under a controversial state Senate bill in the Legislature's Joint Committee on Marijuana Regulation.

Proponents say cannabis smoking lounges would stimulate tourism and give renters a place to legally smoke.

The recreational marijuana law, passed by voters in 2014, has created a conundrum for renters and tourists, proponents say. The law prohibits public consumption of marijuana but allows it in a private residence. If a landlord prohibits marijuana use at a rental unit, or if someone is visiting the state, some renters and tourists may have no legal place to consume the drug.

"In reality, this restriction has

made the legal consumption of cannabis impossible for many Oregonians who do not own their primary residence, live with small children or those who live in government housing. As a result, many otherwise responsible adults are left no other choice but to smoke or vaporize cannabis in public, on sidewalks, in parks, in cars," said Sam Chapman, founder of Portland-based New Economy Consulting, which advises cannabis entrepreneurs and investors.

State Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, D-Beaverton, testified that even with marijuana legalization, minorities have been prosecuted disproportionately for using marijuana illegally in public. Allowing smoking lounges also would help address that social injustice, she said.

Opposition to the bill led to the formation of a committee

workgroup that tried to address concerns by public health officials that the lounges could normalize marijuana smoking for young people and pollute indoor air.

The workgroup proposed changes Tuesday that would require the lounges to be located on outdoor patios screened from public view and would eliminate a provision to allow members of the cannabis industry to obtain licenses to hold temporary events where attendees could consume cannabis. Cities and counties also would have to opt in to allow the licenses for the lounges.

Despite the concessions, public health officials continued to express their opposition to the bill during a hearing at the Capitol.

"The harms of secondhand tobacco smoke are well-known, and secondhand marijuana smoke is also harmful," said

Katrina Hedberg, state health officer and state epidemiologist at the Oregon Health Authority.

Like tobacco, marijuana smoke contains cancer-causing chemicals and poses a risk to those exposed to it, she said.

"By allowing for the social consumption of cannabis, Oregon risks the rollback of years of progress related to social norms around smoking," she said.

Even if smoking areas are screened, minors will still be able to smell marijuana smoke wafting from lounges. She said studies show that communities that have hooka lounges have a higher prevalence of smoking among youth.

"Social normalization does affect youth so we are very concerned about that," she said.

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

# Oregon jobless rate drops to 3.7 percent

Associated Press

Oregon's record-low jobless rate has fallen again.

The state Employment Department said Tuesday the unemployment rate for April was 3.7 percent, a slight drop from March's record-low rate of 3.8 percent.

The agency said gains were widespread among major industries, with government among the few sectors to shed jobs.

The unemployment rate at this time last year was 5 percent. Over the past year, construction has been the fastest-growing industry, followed by transportation, warehousing and utilities.

# Boat captain pleads guilty to fuel spill in Warrenton

Associated Press

The captain of a Washington state fishing vessel has pleaded guilty to violating the Clean Water Act by allowing a diesel fuel spill from his ship while docked at the Warrenton Marina last August.

The Emerald Sea spilled about 150 gallons of fuel into the Skipanon River, a tributary of the Columbia River. Prosecutors said crew

members told Mark Bowers about the mishap when he arrived at the dock, but the captain didn't report it as required until later confronted by U.S. Coast Guard investigators.

The Oregonian reported that Bowers will be sentenced in September. Prosecutors will recommend he serve five years on probation. The vessel's home port is in Aberdeen, Washington.

# New public works director for Cannon Beach

By **BRENN A VISSER**  
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — Longtime Cannon Beach resident Jim Arndt is the new director of public works starting Monday.

Arndt replaces Dan Grascick, who retired at the beginning of May. Arndt has been in public works for municipalities in Washington state, Colorado and California for more than 40 years. He retired from his most recent post in Manhattan Beach, California, in 2013, but decided to come out of retirement to serve a community he

has come to call home.

"I was actually having coffee with my wife when we saw the article in the Cannon Beach Gazette about Dan retiring," Arndt said. "I found that I missed engineering and this was a unique opportunity."

Arndt and his wife have had a house in Cannon Beach on and off since 1988, he said.

City Manager Brant Kucera said Arndt stood out as a candidate because of his familiarity with the area, as well as his decades of experience in public works.

"I think he's going to be a great fit," Kucera said.

Arndt said he liked the fact the city has adopted a parks master plan and drafted water and wastewater master plans.

"I think the city has been doing a good job looking forward with regards to planning," Arndt said. "Not every city gets that far."

Arndt said he has long-standing passion for utility and infrastructure work, and enjoys the challenge of communicating why that work is needed in the community.

Arndt will be taking the lead as the city considers water and wastewater master plans many have deemed controver-

sial after a rate study proposed a 40 percent increase in water rates to implement it.

For the next fiscal year, the city has proposed a 3 percent increase to cover operational costs, but the debate over whether or not rates need to be increased in the future is not over, Kucera said.

"The community is very active and passionate, and I hope to work with the council and the citizens to come to a mutual agreement that works for the town," Arndt said. "I've worked with councils and the community for a long time now, and I hope that experience helps."

# Bill would require disclosure of seismic risk

By **PARIS ACHEN**  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The state Senate has passed a bill 24-5 that requires property owners to disclose seismic risk when selling a house.

"Currently, a house that was constructed before 1974 may not, in fact, be bolted to its foundation," said state Sen. Rod Monroe, D-Portland. "Now if the big one comes, if your house is not bolted to its foundation, it'll slide one way or the other, break the natural gas lines, electric cut off, cause fires. It's a real danger."

The bill, passed by the House of Representatives in late March,

would require property owners who are selling their house to disclose to the buyer whether the house was built before 1974 and whether the house has been secured to its foundation.

"There is no remedy required. It's a matter of answering those two questions," Monroe said.

The legislation now heads to Gov. Kate Brown for a signature.

The bill is one of several showing the Legislature's increasing focus on preparation for a major earthquake. Geologists and seismic experts expect major seismic activity along the Cascadia fault line could devastate communities throughout Oregon, especially along the state's coastline.

Much of Oregon's infrastructure, such as hospitals, roads and bridges, remain vul-

nerable to collapse, according to the 2013 Oregon Seismic Safety Policy Advisory Commission.

Lawmakers also continue to approve record amounts of grant money to reinforce the state's schools against collapse.

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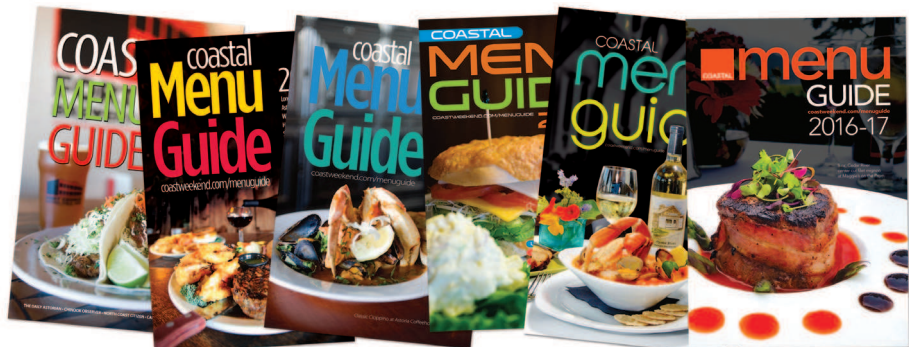


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