

MARIJUANA: Athena taking a 'wait and see' approach

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Rules on the books

Hermiston: While most cities were busy crafting temporary moratoriums and new zoning rules for marijuana dispensaries, Hermiston banned them from the get-go.

The city's codes already prohibited businesses not in compliance with federal law, but in March 2014 the city council doubled down on that rule, voting unanimously to specifically outlaw marijuana dispensaries from within city limits.

Pendleton: The ban on marijuana odors leaving a person's property drew laughs from around the world thanks to a satirical letter asking the city council to outlaw farts, too.

On other marijuana matters, however, the city council has had trouble finding consensus.

After four separate motions the council passed an amendment to the city's development code on May 5 allowing medical marijuana dispensaries in central mixed-use and service-commercial zones as long as they are not within 1,000 feet of a school, public park, another marijuana facility or a community facility primarily attended by minors.

First dispensary owners must get a city business license, however, and talks have stalled as city councilors remain split on reforming business license rules to allow marijuana dispensaries to qualify.

Boardman: In April the city council passed regulations restricting marijuana dispensaries to two types of commercial zones as long as they are at least 1,000 feet away from school, churches, playgrounds and bus stops.

Dispensaries must get a conditional use permit and follow a list of rules that includes closing by 8 p.m., not allowing on-site consumption and not storing any product outdoors.

Stanfield: The city passed a strict marijuana ordinance in June, banning dispensaries from within 400 feet of a residential zone, 1,500 feet of a school and 1,000 feet of public property or another dispensary. Dispensaries would only be allowed to operate between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.

The ordinance also banned smoking marijuana at a dispensary, inside an

enclosed place of employment or within 10 feet of the doors or windows at a place of employment.

City Manager Blair Larsen said if a law passed allowing cities to ban dispensaries altogether Stanfield would most likely do so.

Irrigon: The city repealed its marijuana dispensary rules, described by city manager Aaron Palmquist as "not properly written or cited," in April before replacing them with a new set of regulations.

The rules allow marijuana to be grown and distributed in two types of commercial zones if it is at least 1,000 feet from a school, only indoors and in compliance with all state regulations.

Echo: The city council passed an ordinance in June limiting marijuana dispensaries to the C-1 commercial zone and light industrial zone as long as they are not within 1,000 feet of a school, park, church, daycare, recreational center or another dispensary.

The ordinance also limits registered grow sites to locked, enclosed spaces in the farm residential zone after growers obtain a conditional use permit.

Still in the works

Umatilla County: After giving itself a year to approve regulations for medical marijuana dispensaries and coming up short, the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners voted in April to extend its moratorium on the shops through the end of 2015.

The county's medical marijuana study group has been working on a set of land use proposals that would prohibit medical marijuana dispensaries from being located within a mile of schools, churches, daycares, public recreational facilities and school bus routes. Board chair Tamra Mabbott, who is also the county planning director, told commissioners an extension on the moratorium would give the county planning commission time to examine those rules.

The committee plans to look at crafting regulations regarding recreational marijuana after the end of the legislative session.

Umatilla: City councilors are set to consider a comprehensive overhaul of the city's zoning codes — including rules for dispensaries — on July 13.

In May and June the council discussed but did not vote on the proposed rules, which would limit dispensaries to the general commercial zone and highway commercial zone, both of which are east of Interstate 84 and away from downtown. The outlets could not be located at the same address as a grow site or within 1,000 feet of a school, library, city park or existing dispensary.

Heppner: The city council recently passed an ordinance that keeps dispensaries 1,000 feet from schools and other places children frequent, and requires a conditional use permit to open a business, but those regulations could be replaced with a total ban if the state allows cities to do so.

"The Council will discuss pursuing a total ban when it is allowed; as the voters spoke here," City Manager Kim Cutsforth wrote in an email. "But we need to do a little more research."

Wait and see

Morrow County: Planning director Carla McLane said the county hasn't passed any ordinances pertaining to recreational marijuana yet, but once the legislative session ends the county will examine its options under the new laws.

"Measure 91 did not pass here," McLane said. "If there is an option for a local opt-out we're going to look at it closely."

The county did already pass an ordinance banning medical marijuana dispensaries from within 1,000 feet of a school park, playground, ballfield or anywhere else where minors regularly congregate, as well as from Port of Morrow property.

Milton-Freewater: Staff are still in the researching and drafting stage for a marijuana ordinance that will eventually come before the council.

Pilot Rock: The city has no ordinances regulating marijuana dispensaries, grow sites or recreational use.

Athena: With no current dispensaries in town, the city has announced it is taking a "wait and see" approach, holding off until the end of the current legislative session before crafting any ordinances related to marijuana.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

POLICE: Both police chiefs anticipate violations to rise

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quarter ounce from medical dispensaries as soon as Oct. 1. Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts wrote in an email Tuesday that residents shouldn't expect a significant difference in police behavior in the short-term.

"Simply put, we will not take a very aggressive stance out of the gate," he wrote, "because I believe in a week to a week and a half the Legislative session ends, the pending bills that significantly reshape (Ballot Measure) 91 will become law."

As authorities wait for the Legislature to wrap its session July 11, Roberts said certain marijuana-related offenses, like duis, public consumption and possession by a person under 21, will be continued to be enforced as they always have. Other marijuana-related crimes and violations will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

But however the rules are written, Roberts and Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston both said they anticipate violations to rise.

Edmiston said his department expects to deal with more impaired drivers, and added that even people who want nothing to do with the drug will see its effects.

"Make no mistake, this will impact the livability of the citizens of Hermiston," he wrote in an email. "People who want nothing to do with it will be subjected to it in some way, shape, or form."

The police department's job is to enforce the law as written, Edmiston said, and he expects to "ramp up educating people to include younger students in the schools if requested by the school district."

PGG: Agreement provides better collaboration during 2015 harvest

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on the Snake River, and five on the Columbia River.

Bud Riedner, general manager of McCoy Grain Terminal, said the agreement with PGG provides better collaboration during the 2015 harvest season, which is already expected to be a down due to hot, dry weather.

Indeed, Middleton said the partnership should pull together the most complete information about markets and conditions throughout the region, from The Dalles to Pendleton and eastern Washington and Idaho up to Canada.

"Information is the most valuable thing you can have in the grain business," Middleton said. "It's definitely a bonus to have all that information at our disposal so we can see what's going on."

PGG will continue to provide marketing services at their grower trading desk in Pendleton. The marketing department can be reached at 541-278-5018.

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4547.

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