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PENDLETON

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the pack
REGION/8A



EAST OREGONIAN

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2015

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WINNER OF THE 2015 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar



Amazon Organics, a pot dispensary in Eugene prepares Monday for when they will be able to sell recreational marijuana on Thursday.

AP Photo/Ryan Kang

Parties, discounts to mark start of pot sales

PORTLAND (AP) — Discounts on pot, free food for folks with the munchies and live music will usher in a historic day for Oregon and for marijuana advocates across the country on Thursday, as recreational sales of the drug that is still illegal under federal law begin in the state.

Oregon is one of four states that have legalized the sale of recreational

marijuana. It will start with far more dispensaries than did Colorado or Washington state, where pot shops have been up and running for more than a year. Alaska could begin retail sales next year.

Pot shops in Oregon that already sell medical marijuana have made big plans for the historic day — and hope there is enough supply to meet what is

expected to be a huge demand.

“I’m just trying to basically stock up for maybe four or five times what the normal volume would be,” said Chris Byers, owner of River City Dispensary in the southern Oregon town of Merlin.

Some dispensaries will be opening

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One pungent profession

Umatilla lab tests onions’ acidity

By GEORGE PLAVERN
East Oregonian

Debbie Payton has never liked onions. She didn’t eat them growing up, and she won’t eat them now.

Which is unfortunate, since it’s her job to find out just how pungent onions are.

The smell is predictably powerful inside AgSource Laboratories in Umatilla, where Payton diligently peels, cores, mixes and mashes onion samples from across the country for testing. Farmers request pungency tests around harvest time as a marketing tool for their produce.

The process is long and labor-intensive, said Payton, one of four lab technicians at AgSource. And, while the staff also tests for things like nitrates in wastewater and manure, Payton says onion pungency is her least favorite responsibility.

“Sometimes I’ll smell it all day,” she said. “If they get really bad, I’ll turn the exhaust fan on.”

Onion pungency is measured by the amount of pyruvic acid contained in the bulbs — that’s the chemical that makes people’s eyes sting and water. Sweet onions typically have higher amounts of sugar and low pungency, which is why they’re so popular and able to fetch a higher price in stores.

It might seem like all Payton has to do to gauge pungency is take a whiff and fight back the tears, but there’s a lot more to it than that, she said. Her work area is like a cross between a kitchen prep station and science lab, with cutting board and knife alongside chemicals and test tubes.

Preparation is the key to good data, Payton said as she puts on a pair of blue rubber gloves. Each sample contains a batch of 5-10 onions, which are peeled and cored into a large bowl. After mixing, samples are measured out and pureed into an onion slurry, with the liquid filtered into separate tubes.

Hydrochloric acid is added to the mix, which turns the solution a different color that ranges from light orange to brown.

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Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Lab technician Debbie Payton cuts onions while preparing to sample the onion’s pungency Wednesday at AgSource Laboratories in Umatilla.

No chance to buy pot in Eastern Oregon

Umatilla, Morrow counties banned marijuana shops

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Thursday is the first day in Oregon you can buy recreational marijuana at a medical marijuana dispensary. No dispensaries, though, are operating in Umatilla or Morrow counties.

Umatilla County and Morrow County banned marijuana growers, processors, wholesalers and shops, as have the cities of Athena, Elgin, Ione, Stanfield and Umatilla.

Pilot Rock is considering a ban, Heppner has an ordinance in the works and Boardman has a hearing Tuesday on the matter.

Lexington City Council voted to not allow medical marijuana businesses within 1,000 feet of where children gather, which effectively bans the businesses from the city. Echo took a similar tactic, allowing pot operations in commercial zones as long as they are not within 1,000 feet of a school, park, church, community center or another dispensary.

Weston City Council did not ban pot dispensaries, but it amended its business license rules to exclude businesses in violation of federal law. The Drug Enforcement Agency still considers marijuana a Schedule I substance.

Pendleton City Council approved zoning regulations for marijuana operations, but then effectively banned dispensaries because the businesses violate federal law. And Hermiston and Milton-Freewater are considering letting voters decide in 2016.

The Legislature amended Measure 91 with House Bill 3400 to allow state-licensed medical marijuana dispensaries to sell recreational marijuana products to adults starting Thursday. The Oregon Liquor Control Commission, the agency

See MARIJUANA/8A

PENDLETON

City to replace decrepit South Hill staircase

Too late in construction season to start this year

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

Although initial reports about the Southwest 13th Street stairway indicated it could be repaired, it now looks like it could be closed for much longer.

City officials said Wednesday that a deeper inspection of the stairs revealed enough structural damage to require a completely new set for the South Hill street.

The city was galvanized into action Sept. 22 when a Pendleton resident Nathan Savage reported his son fell on the stairs because of their

poor quality. He subsequently posted a video on Facebook detailing the crumbling infrastructure.

Following an analysis of the stairs by Public Works Superintendent Jeff Brown and City Attorney Nancy Kerns, they recommended the city close the stairs to the public and start repairs soon.

While the stairs were closed, a second evaluation done by the city’s engineering department revealed that some basic upkeep wouldn’t be enough — the decades-old concrete structure’s exposure to the elements from both the top and bottom necessitated a completely new flight.

Police Chief Stuart Roberts, acting as interim city manager while Robb

See STAIRS/8A



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

A new sign directing stair users to the Southwest 10th Street stairs is up on the closed staircase at Southwest 13th Street on Wednesday in Pendleton.



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