



Eric Mortenson/EO Media Group  
Blair Busenbark, COO of Adaptive Plastics Inc. in Salem, says marijuana growers are new buyers of the company's Solexx brand greenhouse panels.

## MARIJUANA: Chalice Farms is opening a 24,000 square foot facility near the Portland Airport

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the pot trade. A Salem company, Adaptive Plastics Inc., makes a brand of translucent, twin-walled greenhouse panels called Solexx. They diffuse light and insulate well, and you can't see what's growing inside.

Blair Busenbark, the COO and sales boss, said the company also sells to traditional plant nurseries and to orchardists, but marijuana growers are the new market.

A lot of people attending the trade show were "consumers of the product," Busenbark guessed.

"We look at it as a business opportunity," he said. "A significant part of our business is cannabis."

The next aisle over held a booth for the Oregon Cannabis Association, a nonprofit professional organization representing growers, processors, dispensaries and other businesses. The executive director is Amy Margolis of Portland, whose Emerge Law Group specializes in weed work. One of the firm's attorneys, Dave Kopilak, was the primary drafter of Measure 91,

which legalized recreational use, possession and cultivation in Oregon. Voters approved it in 2014 and the law took effect July 1, 2015.

Conventional farmers might respond "Hmm, well..." but Margolis said Oregon's cannabis trade is, at root level, an agricultural enterprise. Voters said so.

"In 2015 they officially made cannabis an ag product," she said. "The upshot is, this became a cash crop like any other cash crop."

But it is a different animal, for sure. One of the bigger outfits, Chalice Farms, is opening a 24,000 square foot grow, processing and distribution facility near the Portland Airport. It will be in a warehouse.

Other businesses abound. Security firms (CannaGuard) that provide video monitoring and "product transport." Software (CannaScore) that allows you to check your regulatory compliance. Marketers, electricians, packaging companies and extraction services. The latter extract cannabis oil from fibrous marijuana plant material. The oil is used in edibles consumed



Eric Mortenson/EO Media Group  
Vendors at the cannabis convention in Portland touted items such as "Bud Bar" displays retailers can use to highlight product.

by medical marijuana patients.

Some of the businesses crowding into cannabis will no doubt fall by the wayside, but people attending the convention seemed ready to chase what they see as economic opportunity.

Noah Stokes, founder and CEO of CannaGuard, the security firm, opened the conference by noting marijuana is still federally illegal.

"We're saying screw it, we're actually going to do this," Stokes said. "And I love it."



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## WAGE: One amendment would exclude agricultural workers from the increase

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outcry from constituents in Eastern Oregon that the governor's minimums were too high for that region of the state.

Brown's proposal would raise the minimum from \$9.25 to \$14.50 in the Portland metro area and to \$13.25 in the rest of the state by 2022.

"We heard a lot of concern about some of those frontier parts of the state that they were going to have a particularly hard time accommodating those increases," Dembrow said. "Some preferred their counties to be excluded completely from an increase in minimum wage. That is, to me, just not acceptable. There are workers in those counties that need a raise."

Under Dembrow's proposal, wages would increase statewide to \$9.75 in July 2016 and rise gradually from there until 2022 according to region.

The lowest rate of \$12.50 would apply to the following counties: Baker, Coos, Crook, Curry, Douglas, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa and Wheeler.

Ron Vernini, mayor of Ontario, said his city fails to attract businesses because companies prefer to go to nearby Idaho where wages are lower.

Raising the minimum could "in many cases destroy jobs in communities that now are struggling to keep from

going deeper into the spiral of poverty," he wrote in a letter to lawmakers.

Senators have pitched various amendments to Dembrow's proposal. It was unclear Thursday if any of those would receive consideration Friday.

One by Sen. Chuck Thomsen, R-Hood River, would exclude agricultural workers from the wage increase.

Many farmers have spoken out against a minimum wage increase, saying it would force them to make cuts to employees.

Trevor Frahm, who owns a farm in Nyssa, said a \$1 increase in the minimum would force him to eliminate a few of his 20 employees.

"A three- to five-dollar increase would force me to move my facility to Idaho, which is only three miles away," Frahm said.

Surveys indicate most people in Portland, where housing costs have skyrocketed, support a hike in the minimum.

Patti Whitney-Wise of Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon in Portland said families need an increase just to meet basic needs.

Dembrow's wage plan is based on data from Portland State University and the University of Washington that shows what income is required to be self-sufficient in different counties in Oregon.

"We are one state, and yet we are not one state," Dembrow said.

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