

Pendleton lifts marijuana ban; Hermiston and Milton-Freewater keep bans

Pendleton residents voted to legalize both medical and recreational marijuana sales in Pendleton on Nov. 8.

Asked three questions about whether to repeal the prohibition of sales of medical and recreational marijuana and institute a local 3 percent tax in the city, each passed by a significant margin.

This makes Pendleton the first city in Umatilla County to legalize marijuana sales, joining only a handful of Eastern Oregon cities in the process.

Hermiston and Milton-Freewater also had marijuana measures on the ballot, but the electorate in both cities voted to retain their bans.

Pendleton's decision to overturn the ban completed a complete reversal of fortunes for an issue that began when Measure 91 passed in 2014, legalizing recreational marijuana consumption and sales.

The Oregon Legislature subsequently passed a law that allowed local governments in counties that voted against Measure 91 to ban marijuana sales with a vote from the city council or county commission, which applied to Umatilla County.

City manager Robb Corbett said he would have to talk with city attorney Nancy Kerns to determine how and when the city would begin allowing marijuana businesses in city limits.

Although the council has already passed zoning codes for marijuana businesses, Corbett said he will ask the city council to look at making changes to its business license rules, which currently prohibits business from violating federal law.



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