

Cannabis: Oregon pot retailers begin pulling vape brands in lung scare

Continued from Page A1

The Associated Press on Wednesday that it will soon begin asking retailers to voluntarily review their vaping offerings and pull those that spark concern.

Kind Leaf Pendleton, a pot retailer with the largest inventory in Oregon, said it has already pulled 68 vaping products from 15 brands amid uncertainty over what is causing the lung-related illnesses.

“What would really hurt is having someone purchase a product and die from vaping,” said Erin Purchase, director of operations at Kind Leaf. “Safety is priority here.”

California-based Berkeley Patients Group, the oldest medical dispensary in the country, also said it is contacting all its vendors to ensure products are additive free.

Several hundred people nationwide have gotten a severe lung illness that’s been tied to electronic cigarette use. Six of those individuals have died, including one person in Oregon.

Amid a rampant black market in illicit marijuana vapes, the Oregon death is the only one that public health authorities have linked to a purchase at a legal cannabis retailer. Authorities have not released further details.

Most of the patients said they vaped products containing THC, the compound in marijuana that causes a high. Some said they vaped



A bud tender helps customers at a dispensary in Portland. In the wake of lung illnesses and deaths related to vaping, Oregon will ask its legal marijuana retailers to review the cannabis products on their shelves and voluntarily hold or pull those that they don’t feel confident about.

only nicotine, while others said they used both THC and nicotine.

After extensive testing, New York investigators have focused on vitamin E acetate, which recently has been used as a thickener, particularly in black market

vape cartridges.

Suppliers say it dilutes vape oils without making them look watery. Vitamin E is safe as a vitamin pill or to use on the skin but inhaling oily vitamin E droplets can trigger pneumonia.

Officials in New York

have subpoenaed three of the biggest thickener manufacturers.

Kind Leaf said it identified all products on its shelves that listed “non-cannabis derived terpenes and artificial and natural flavors” on the label without

specifying the ingredients in those additives.

Terpenes are the building blocks that give a plant its aroma and flavor, such as lavender or tea tree oil. Some cannabis oil manufacturers add terpenes from other plants to their prod-

ucts for consistency and cost effectiveness.

When Kind Leaf tracked down the companies that sold non-marijuana terpenes to makers of vape pens, they noticed that some of them also make and sell the so-called cutting agents, or thickeners, which have come under scrutiny.

“We can’t prove that those products are not in these vape pens because we’re retailers, not processors,” Purchase said. “They’re allowed to have trade secrets and proprietary information so we just felt uncomfortable. It’s unsettling.”

Oregon Liquor Control Commission executive director Steve Marks told the AP on Wednesday that his agency does not test marijuana vapes sold in state-licensed stores for additives. No marijuana oil manufacturer licensed by the state has listed vitamin E acetate as an ingredient, which would trigger a safety review, he said.

Any company that has added an “undisclosed agent” to its vape cartridges should tell regulators immediately or face “legal complications and probably additional liabilities,” he said.

“My worry is that some of these folks may have gone around and put vitamin E in their products that we are unaware of,” Marks said. “If it’s in our products, it’s out there and we don’t have a clear way to know which ones it may or may not be in.”



A Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association official wears pink during Tough Enough to Wear Pink Day during Thursday’s Pendleton Round-Up.

Pink: Pendleton Round-Up has been supporting local branch for 14 years

Continued from Page A1

New Beginnings program. White-Zollman said the clinic money covers costs from wigs and mastectomy bras, to travel so patients can get to treatment, and Kick’n Cancer helps survivors with the costs such as physical therapy, yoga classes and nutrition.

Kathryn Youngman of Pendleton said Tough Enough came through for her when she needed it. She beat one type of cancer in 1991, a different type in 2013, and then breast cancer in 2016.

“I had huge medical bills — I still have have huge medical bills — and Tough Enough to Wear Pink helped with the expenses of cancer,” she said.

The physical effects of cancer can be obvious, she said, but the disease touches all aspects of a patient’s life.

“They might not see the

emotional and psychological side,” she said, “or the financial side.”

Offsetting the costs of travel for radiation therapy, she said, helps shrink one worry, and that’s a significant uplift for the patient.

Thursday of the Round-Up is the nonprofit’s most visible community event. Rodeo athletes and fans don pink and processions of cancer patients and survivors get a moment in the Round-Up Arena. White-Zollman said the local campaign is finding more ways to raise its profile and receives constant calls from individuals and organizations that want to partner up.

Case in point, she said, Pendleton police got in on the Tough Enough action. The city police department sports a patch with the a cowboy riding a bucking bronco. Thursday’s version of the patch included a pink ribbon,

the cowboy in pink and pink lettering for “PENDLETON POLICE.” White-Zollman said Police Chef Stuart Roberts even gave the nonprofit a large replica of the patch, which after Round-Up will go on display at the police department.

“It’s great to see the community so supportive of Tough Enough to Wear Pink and our local survivors and cancer patients,” White-Zollman said.

Youngman said the reputation is growing well beyond Oregon. She said she attended last Saturday’s soft opening of the Eastern Oregon Cancer Center in Pendleton at 1713 S.W. 24th St., near St. Anthony Hospital. One of the doctors there said he was well aware of Pendleton’s Tough Enough to Wear Pink.

She said the doctor learned about it back in his home state of Alaska.



Annie Surratt, right, assembles a beaded strap as Happy Canyon Princesses Kayla Fossek and Kaia John watch at Reflections of the Brand on Wednesday. Reflections of the Brand is a pop-up gallery that opened in the old Pendleton Grain Growers building for the week of Round-Up.

Shops: A number of enterprising entrepreneurs using vacant stores

Continued from Page A1

ens of events per year. Her shop will stick around until Tuesday, before event-hopping all the way to the National Finals Rodeo in December.

“This is just the beginning of the mad dash to Christmas,” she said.

Round-Up week is often an exercise in how to squeeze the most out of existing commercial spaces. Besides the vendors who line the streets, restaurants suddenly find more room for outdoor dining, and sidewalk sales abound.

Enterprising entrepreneurs, like Couture, also use some of Pendleton’s vacant storefronts for pop-up shops. These companies rent the space for the week to take advantage of the swollen customer base before tearing everything down and moving out when the rodeo ends.

Lucchese Bootmaker has done pop-up shops across the country, but this is their first trip to Round-Up.

Mario Vega, Lucchese’s special events director, said establishing a pop-up shop has been the Texas-based company’s ambition for about a decade, but it wasn’t until staff members found the building at 156 S. Main St. that they were able to

make it a reality.

A former bank, the space has mostly sat vacant for years, even after real estate developer Jordan Schnitzer bought it in 2016.

Vega said the products made by Lucchese (pronounced Loo-kay-see) aren’t meant to be sold in a parking lot or sidewalk, and the Main Street location put them right in the heart of Pendleton.

It took quite a bit of effort to set up the shop.

Vega said this was the furthest northwest Lucchese had ever gone for a pop-up shop and the company needed to unload 3,000 pairs of boots from a 53-foot trailer to stock their inventory. The whole setup process lasted three days and Lucchese brought five employees to man the store all week.

Business has been slow in the early days of Round-Up week, and Vega is hoping the pace picks up before he and his staff leave because he would like to return.

Vega said he’s been to all the biggest rodeos in Texas, but the Pendleton Round-Up is the best one he’s seen.

He added that the Texas rodeos bring in people by scheduling big name musical acts to perform after the rodeo activities end for the day, but in Pendleton,

the audience doesn’t need the promise of a famous performer to enjoy the rodeo.

While Couture West and Lucchese chose modestly sized spaces for their pop-up shops, the “Reflections of the Brand” Western art gallery did not skimp on space.

The gallery filled up the vacant retail space at the 1000 S.W. Dorion Ave. former Pendleton Grain Growers building. PGG vacated the space as it shut down all of its retail operations in 2014 on its way to dissolving the co-op in 2016.

But on Wednesday, it was bustling again as tourists, residents, and even the Happy Canyon princesses browsed through the art.

Brian Currin, PGG properties manager, said he had the idea to host an art gallery at the old store before last year’s Round-Up, but he needed time to organize.

He contacted his longtime friend, Denise Smith, to curate and manage the show, and she was able to bring in 24 different exhibitors to show their art at the space.

It was a big undertaking, but Smith said she put in a special effort for Pendleton.

“You bring your best here,” she said.