

Pot meeting draws a crowd

BY MATT HOLLANDER
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) stopped in Eugene last Tuesday as part of its statewide tour of "listening sessions" to gather input before drafting rules for marketing and selling recreational marijuana. About 500 residents packed the Lane Event Center's Wheeler Pavilion to offer their opinions.

The term "colorful topic" took on literal meaning as attendees were asked to express their level of agreement on a variety of issues by flashing a green, yellow or red card.

Two matters that produced a resoundingly green response: licenses for growing should be for Oregon residents only, and there should be limits to those operations.

In explanation of their votes, several speakers said that these steps would keep out-of-state interests at bay and maintain a market that's accessible to the "micro farmer."

OLCC Chairman Rob Patridge presided over the meeting. And from the beginning, Patridge — who admitted he was against Measure 91 — emphasized that the purpose of the session was to discuss how the OLCC might implement the measure in a safe, responsible and effective manner; it was not to debate the measure, or, for example, discuss where marijuana can and cannot be consumed — which will be an issue for the state legislature to decide.

"My job as commissioner is to put in place an industry that Oregon voters have asked for," he said.

Cottage Grove Mayor Tom Munroe, who



photo by Matt Hollander

Colored cards were used to gauge public opinion on priorities for marijuana regulation during an input-gathering session in Eugene last week.

was in attendance, observed that the event was more about fact-finding than communicating any new information, and that the subject continues to have a "wait and see" status. He was, however, surprised to hear that medicinal and recreational marijuana could be sold out of the same locations; he recalled being told otherwise at the outset of these discussions.

Mayor Munroe was also skeptical when he heard during the presentation that state police are to assume the majority of enforcement responsibilities.

"The reality is that the state police may be overwhelmed by calls on marijuana, and when that happens they will start diverting some to the county sheriffs, who simply don't have the necessary resources to handle those additional calls," he said.

City Manager Richard Meyers did not attend the symposium, but said the City did not attempt to write-in any additional laws or taxes with regards to recreational marijuana. He also does not believe that Cottage Grove will be any more or less impacted by this measure than comparable communi-

ties.

The passing of Measure 91 gave the OLCC authority to license, regulate and tax recreational marijuana and to adopt rules to do so. It hopes to complete this process by November. Personal possession and home production in limited amounts for an adult age 21 or older becomes legal on July 1.

Patridge said that the commission is moving forward "in the spirit of the law" but that significant work lies ahead. The OLCC plans to complete its round of community meetings by mid-March, and then begin drafting rules while the legislature is still in session — knowing that many Measure 91-related bills could still be in play heading into summer.

The OLCC must accept applications to license recreational marijuana producers, processors, wholesalers and retailers by Jan. 4, 2016, with retail sales expected to begin later that year. Producers will be responsible for collecting tax at the first point of sale.

Additional information can be found at www.marijuana.oregon.gov.

R&B Revue features talent of students, local musicians

Event raises funds for camps and competitions

Mid-February means it's time again for Cottage Grove High School's Metropolitan Rhythm and Blues Revue!

The musical revue, directed by David Larsen, Cottage Grove High School Music Director, opens Feb. 19 for four shows at the Cottage Theatre. When the singing and dancing is over, students at the high school will have earned the \$8,000 or so needed to fund their way to music camps and competitions.

The Jazz Band will entertain with songs including "Alright, Okay, You Win," and "Friend Like Me," a tribute to everyone's favorite genie, Robin Williams.

Select band members will step out to form the student jazz combo, and many community musicians will join with the high school groups and adult vocalists throughout the show. This year's adult musicians will be Chuck Heritage on bass, Chris Klein on guitar and sax, Travis Wong on sax, Adam Harris on sax, and Larsen on sax, along with CGHS graduates Jacob Marsh on bass and David Richards on sax.

The award-winning choral group Shades of Jazz will also be making several appearances on stage singing hits like "Don't Stop Me Now" and "Sweet Georgia Brown," and throughout the evening individual members of the group will step out on stage for solo performances and as backup singers.

Choreographers Janet Rust, high school drama teacher; Mandy Conforth, South Lane Ballet Academy instructor; Leslie Rubinstein and Annie Odean have cranked it up again with great dancing on lots of numbers throughout the show.

Organizers say the adults from this community are what make the Metropolitan Rhythm & Blues Revue such an amazing event. Keith Kessler, Joanna Newton, Laurie Hammond, Chris Klein and Shelley Dill will be sharing their vocal talents again this year to help create this show.

Performances are Thursday, Feb. 19 through Saturday, Feb. 21 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 22 at 2:30 p.m.

Those seeking ticket information may contact the Cottage Theatre at 541-942-8001 or at www.cottagetheatre.org. Tickets are \$15 adults or \$12 for students and seniors.

Grant will fund Chamber tourism marketing

Bridges and Beyond campaign targets out-of-town visitors

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

A campaign by the Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce to market this community as a tourist destination for out-of-town guests got a boost last week from grant funding awarded by the Lane County Board of Commissioners.

The Chamber's "Bridges and Beyond" campaign was announced as one of several recipi-

ents of a Tourism Special Project Grant from the County's Transient Room Tax grant program. Other projects funded included marketing efforts for the Eugene Opera, the Vineyards Marathon, a racetrack in Oakridge and the Florence Chamber's "Uncurbed Adventures" campaign.

Grants awarded totaled \$100,087, and Chamber of Commerce Director Travis Palmer said the Chamber was approved for its full asking amount of \$10,000, which is contingent on the Chamber raising its own \$5000 match.

The Bridges and Beyond Campaign, Palmer explained, is

a multimedia campaign to target out-of-area visitors for day and weekend trips to Cottage Grove. Last year, Chamber members contributed \$30,000 in funds that were pooled to launch an advertising blitz in television, newspaper, brochure and website marketing. Much of the advertising was targeted toward the Vancouver, Wash. area.

Palmer said the guestbook at the Cottage Grove Community Center — frequently signed by visitors to the community — indicated an influx of visitors from the Vancouver area. He said the Chamber applied for the County's grant program last year, but

Bridges and Beyond was not funded. Still, Palmer believes the efforts by the Chamber to launch the project on its own with funds raised in the community helped bolster its chances of receiving the grant this year.

The grant funding will be used for another cross-section of television, newspaper and online advertising, Palmer said. He added that the money should go further this year because the Chamber has already funded and already owns the advertising that will be used to further market Cottage Grove as a tourist destination.

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