

Pot shops see decline in prices

Median price for usable cannabis in Oregon is down 19% from last year

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Pendleton cannabis stores are weathering the latest trend in their industry — declining prices at the counter.

The Portland Business Journal has reported the median price for usable cannabis in Oregon is down 19% from last year. The drop is happening while inflation is driving up the costs of fuel and groceries nationwide.

Brandon Krenzler is co-owner of Kind Leaf, one of the four cannabis dispensaries operating in Pendleton. He said he sees a few factors at play in the price drop.

“Everyone is spending their paycheck on food and fuel,” he said. “When people are spending more on gas, food, they don’t have as much to spend on cannabis.”

And transportation costs, he said, “are killing everybody.”

Kind Leaf co-owner Erin Purchase concurred and said it’s not just prices at the pump and grocery stores that have been rising, but also utilities are costing more.

“I think we’re seeing a decline in vices, cannabis sales in particular,” she said.

Krenzler also said an oversupply of product is pushing down prices. He pointed to Canada as a major source for that abundance.

The United States’ northern neighbor has allowed “huge, major players to come in,” he said, with massive greenhouses that come with big harvests. Too much product, and the prices plummet. That comes with some dire consequences, he said.

Larger farms and out-of-state farms might have more cushion against hard economic times, Krenzler explained, and can afford to lower their prices and recover to keep paying their bills. But smaller farms have less cushion, and sometimes they have investors to pay back. The situation allows big cannabis farms to cannibalize small farms.

Kind Leaf carries about 160 strains it sources from a variety of farms with a focus on family-owned, craft farmers, Krenzler said, and not all of those business partners are making it.

“We’re seeing a lot of farms going out of business,” Krenzler said, including a couple of cannabis producers Kind Leaf carries.

“Some of their products on our shelves are

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Yasser Marte/East Oregonian

Chris Adams, morning supervisor at Thur’s Smoke Shop, Pendleton, shows a jar of marijuana buds on Monday, July 25, 2022. Cannabis prices have fallen in Oregon, and local dispensaries report customers are tending to buy less expensive product.



Shannon Golden/The Observer

Corri Klebaum, branch manager and adviser at Finance of America Mortgage, stands in front of her newly renovated storefront on Wednesday, July 20, 2022. The branch received a grant for the facade renovation through La Grande’s Main Street Downtown Facade Grant Program.

A NEW LOOK

La Grande’s Finance of America Mortgage branch receives a revamp with the help of La Grande Main Street Downtown and Urban Renewal Agency

By SHANNON GOLDEN • The Observer

LA GRANDE — Thanks to La Grande Main Street Downtown’s Facade Grant Program, one of Adams Avenue’s newest additions just got a facelift.

La Grande’s branch of Finance of America Mortgage, 1214 Adams Ave., received the grant funded by the city’s Urban Renewal Agency for renovations to its storefront this year. With fresh paint and new signage and window trimmings, the building that once housed Tap That Growler now has a markedly different feel.

Corri Klebaum, branch manager and mortgage adviser of the La Grande branch, moved to town in July 2018. She set up shop at a few other offices around town, but kept her eyes peeled for a larger space on Adams Avenue. She moved into the branch’s current location a year ago and applied for the grant while finishing the last details on the interior renovations that began in March 2021. Now, with the business’ newly renovated storefront on the main drag, Klebaum has found what she called her “forever home.”

“Our goal is not only to be great loan advisers, but to be good stewards of this building and honor the history that’s here,” Klebaum said of her intentions for the new space.

Klebaum, who grew up in Oregon and Washington, never thought she’d find herself in La Grande — but she’s

not complaining. Her oldest daughter, Jordan, went to school at Eastern Oregon University, fell in love with La Grande and got a teaching job in Union County. Corri Klebaum and her family decided to see for themselves. She pitched an idea for a satellite branch with the higher-ups at the national com-



Shannon Golden/The Observer

A sign welcomes customers into Finance of America Mortgage’s La Grande branch, 1214 Adams Ave., on Wednesday, July 20, 2022. The branch received a grant for the facade renovation through La Grande’s Main Street Downtown Facade Grant Program.

pany, and in 2018, she and her husband of 30 years, Kirk, moved to La Grande with their two youngest daughters. Her parents followed suit.

Klebaum credited Union County for its giving and close-knit nature, recalling the generous donations collected at the first Eastern Oregon Livestock Show she and her family attended while considering the move.

“We definitely wanted to raise our kids in this community,” she said.

At present, Klebaum and her assistant, Andi Warn, are the only employees in the office. Still, with mortgage licenses in 11 states, Klebaum keeps busy. She serves more than 75 families in the area, from first home purchases to high dollar investment properties.

The grant funded the renovation of the facade, but the revamp didn’t stop at the front door. Klebaum finished remodeling the building’s interior in late May, replacing the darkened space with crisp, bright colors and fixtures.

The building, constructed in 1892 by an early settler to La Grande, is one of the latest grant recipients of the program. For 10 years running, the program has aimed to incentivize downtown businesses to repair and preserve their storied facades.

“We are not going to approve any renovations that deteriorate the historic character,” Taylor Scroggins, the executive director of La Grande Main Street Downtown, noted.

Businesses can apply for up to two grants every four years, for unique projects. From signage repair to brickwork and paint jobs, between four and five business owners apply yearly.

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Z’s BBQ moves into historic Lostine Tavern

By BILL BRADSHAW
Wallowa County Chieftain

LOSTINE — It’s not often a new business comes to Lostine, but Z’s BBQ has set up shop in the historic Lostine Tavern.

“It’s a neat, historic building that’s been here for a hundred years plus and it’s been different things,” said Dan Ziemann, who with wife, Autumn, owns and operates the business. “It’s neat to have that. I know it used to be a totally different thing in the same building. What we’re looking to do is serve really good food in a fun atmosphere as a place where you want to hang out. That’s our goal.”

Z’s was formerly located outside at The Depot

between Enterprise and Joseph, where Autumn’s mother and sister operate a bed-and-breakfast and her brother and his girlfriend operate a sushi bar.

A home base

Ziemann said he wants to contribute to — not detract from — the historic character of the Lostine Tavern. As a result, there will be no name change.

“What the official name will be is the Lostine Tavern, Home of Z’s BBQ,” he said. “It’s had that name for however long (and there’s no reason to change that. We’ll add a little bit of a sign to the sign that’s already there.”

The tavern building, built in 1902, originally

housed a pharmacy and doctor’s office. It also has been the home to a soda fountain, a tavern and a farm-to-table restaurant. The building also includes an apartment upstairs.

From their former location at The Depot, the Ziemanns did their slow cooking of Texas barbecue-style meat and either sold it as takeout and ran a barbecue truck to various events.

“(Autumn’s) family still operates The Depot and we wanted to move on so we moved out here,” Ziemann said. “We still move the food truck around — we haven’t gotten rid of that side of things — but we’ve got a home base now here.”

Now they can welcome about 100 diners and still



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

From left, Autumn Ziemann, Dan Ziemann and Jon Larson on Wednesday, July 13, 2022, pose at the bar at the historic Lostine Tavern where their business, Z’s BBQ, is now located. The Ziemanns are working to get a liquor license and should be ready to serve liquor, beer and wine by September.

maintain the take-out and food truck. Each Monday, the truck is parked at the Wallowa Lake Lodge and on weekends they cater or

attend various community events. The Lostine location will be open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

The menu

The menu consists of a half-pound of either pulled pork, ribs or brisket served with various sides, such as baked beans and bread.

“My alarm’s going off at 3 in the morning to get up and get the fire started and get meat on by 4 a.m. because we start service by 4 in the afternoon,” Ziemann said. “Those things that we’re cooking take between eight and 12 hours sometimes. It’s a long process, but it’s good barbecue — ribs and brisket, pulled pork and we do different specials pretty regularly.”

The menu is nearly all homemade.

“Almost everything we

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