

Mentorships in Central Oregon

BEND OUTDOOR WORX HELPS SCALE BUSINESSES

BY SUZANNE ROIG • The Bulletin

Sometimes, when you want to do something yourself, you need help — even when your project is to make DIY projects for others. Just ask Brian Bates and Colin Clark, Bend residents who convert Mercedes brand Sprinter vans into mini RVs. After four years of converting vans one at a time, Bates and Clark want to make DIY kits, but they’re unsure of how to make the pivot from doing the work themselves to making kits to sell for others to assemble.



Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin

Colin Clark, left, and Brian Bates, co-founders of Explori, with a modified Sprinter van at their shop in Bend.

Their company, Explori Vans, is among four businesses selected for this year’s cohort of Bend Outdoor Worx, an outdoor-specific accelerator that offers mentorship and resources to outdoor startup businesses. This cohort also includes

Moon Fab, a Memphis, Tennessee-based portable vehicle awning company, Tough Cutie, an Austin, Texas, sock company made for women by women and Tailgate Industries, a Bend-based goggle case and accessory company.

Since starting in 2014, Bend Outdoor Worx has helped 20 outdoor businesses with a 16-week program that includes weekly meetings and visits from mentors. “We are excited to kick off this cohort with an online hybrid format,” said Gary

Bracelin, founder of the accelerator. “We help businesses develop road maps for the next several years and align them with resources and connections to fulfill their needs and goals.”

See **Worx** / C8

Workers who legally use cannabis can still lose their jobs

BY SOPHIE QUINTON  
Stateline.org

Thirty-seven states now allow adults to use marijuana medically, recreationally or both. But in most of those states, people can be fired or denied a job for using cannabis in their free time.

Cannabis legalization advocates want states to do more to protect workers. They note that workplace drug tests don’t measure whether someone is high at the time of the test, just whether they’ve used recently. And they say workplace drug testing is an equity issue, as tests are more common in blue-collar jobs and disproportionately

“Going back many, many years, companies have had employees who have either been hurt or killed, unfortunately, with marijuana in their systems.”

— Stan Dempsey, Colorado Mining Association president

affect non-White workers.

But certain employers are required to test for marijuana under federal law—the federal government classifies marijuana as a dangerous drug akin to heroin—and others want to make sure they don’t employ drug users who could threaten workplace safety.

So far, 14 states and Washington, D.C., have banned employers from discriminating against

workers who use marijuana for medical reasons. New Jersey and New York ban employers from discriminating against workers who legally use marijuana medically or recreationally. And Nevada bans employers from refusing to hire someone solely because they fail a marijuana test. The laws generally make exceptions for certain employers and occupations.

But bills have stumbled else-

where because of opposition from business groups and disagreements over how to measure marijuana intoxication. A bill filed in Washington state this session already has been tabled. A California bill faces an uphill battle. And, in light of opposition, a Colorado bill will be softened to studying the issue.

The initial version of the Colorado bill would have affirmed the right of medical marijuana patients to use cannabis products at work and would have prevented employers from firing or refusing to hire workers who use marijuana off the job.

See **Cannabis** / C3



Irfan Khan/Los Angeles Times

The Healing Center is a marijuana dispensary, in Needles, California. Although adults can legally use marijuana in California and many other states, they still can be fired for failing a workplace drug test.