

FARM

Continued from Page A1

The law, which was approved by voters in the November 2014 election and takes effect July 1, allows individuals to possess up to eight ounces of pot and grow up to four plants per household for personal use.

As pot prohibition laws begin to recede nationally, however, the prospect of bigger markets and industrial-sized grow operations occasionally comes up in casual, just-wondering type of conversations, some producers say. What if Oregon's grass seed growers decided to grow the other kind of grass? What if the state's nursery operators turned their greenhouse expertise to marijuana



Pamplin Media Group

An OSU pot policy expert says conventional farmers would swamp the market if they got into large-scale commercial marijuana production. Existing growers, he says, already produce more than is consumed in Oregon.

production?

Crawford said they shouldn't bother, because supply already outstrips demand.

Crawford said cannabis – unofficially – is Oregon's most valuable crop, with an estimated annual value approaching \$1 billion. Based

on his surveys of legal and illegal growers, the state's "internal marijuana demand" in 2014 was about 150,628 pounds. At \$150 an ounce, that's \$361 million.

Medical marijuana growers grew and exported 391,694 pounds above the Oregon demand, worth another \$587 million, Crawford said. That makes the farm gate value of Oregon's pot exports alone greater than the combined value of hazelnuts, pears, wine grapes, Christmas trees and blueberries, according to Crawford's estimates.

Crawford said his figures are based on self-reported data from growers he reached through a "chain referral" survey technique, in which the first respondents invite others in their social network to take part, and the sample size grows in a snow-

ball fashion. Still, the underground nature of the industry makes it difficult to get precise information, Crawford acknowledged.

Bruce Pokarney, spokesman for the Oregon Department of Agriculture, said the department has no way to assess the state's cannabis crop value. "But, assuming the OSU numbers are correct, marijuana would likely be at the top of the list of commodities in terms of production value," he said in an email.

The department assists other commodity groups with research, marketing and regulations, but is in a holding pattern as the Legislature decides how to implement Measure 91, Pokarney said.

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

Grant Union – February



Samantha Floyd
Grade: 7
Parents: Greg and Joelene Floyd



Marissa Smith
Grade: 8
Parents: Brent and Kim Smith



Cameron Hallgarth
Grade 9
Parents: Casey and Heidi Hallgarth



Hailey Carter
Grade: 10
Parents: Mat and Jennifer Carter



Mariah Boyd
Grade: 11
Parents: Sheila Owens and Alan Boyd



Derrick Rider
Grade: 12
Parents: Corry and Vikki Rider

POT

Continued from Page A1

The Mt. Vernon City Council also is scheduled to consider a "time, place and manner" medical marijuana ordinance on April 14.

The John Day Council is seeking community input on both ordinances at its meet-

ing, which begins at 7 p.m. Tuesday at City Hall. Copies are available for review at City Hall or on the website at cityofjohnday.com.

In a release this week, John Day officials said the council felt "the unique characteristics of medical marijuana dispensary operations and their potential impacts necessitate the establishment of particular reasonable time,

place and manner regulations for such operations."

The council also would establish a separate permitting process for the dispensaries.

City Manager Peggy Gray said adoption would put the restrictions in place but they would go into effect only if the ban ends.

The proposed regulations would outlaw the operation of medical marijuana dispensaries within 1,000 feet of schools and other sites used for "youth development

activities," which include non-school activities such as sports, recreation, tutoring and music lessons.

The city would also require a business license fee and an application detailing the accounting and inventory systems, proposed signage, state medical marijuana licensing information and more.

The proposed regulations also address accounting and record-keeping requirements, and information for background checks on operators

and others with a financial interest in the business.

The dispensaries would be limited to hours to 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and would not be allowed at the site of a grow operation. Minors wouldn't be allowed on the premises unless they are cardholders and accompanied by a parent or guardian purchasing the marijuana.

The ordinance also would require tamper-proof labeling and other safety measures for edible marijuana products.

The Mt. Vernon City Council will hold a public Hearing on an Ordinance of the City of Mt. Vernon Establishing Time, Place, and Manner Regulations Concerning Medical Marijuana Dispensaries; and Declaring an Emergency. The hearing will take place at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, April 14th during our regular council meeting at the Mt. Vernon City Hall, 199 W. Main St., Mt. Vernon OR 97865. The Document is available for public review at Mt. Vernon City Hall.

1601

FIRE

Continued from Page A1

Local residents can expect to see smoke as the

exercises take place, but no traffic interruptions are expected.

John Day Fire Chief Ron Smith welcomed the chance for hands-on structure fire practice.

"With low statistics of structural fires in the area, this opportunity to provide a live atmosphere is critical to the education of new trainees and inexperienced firefighters," he said.

Smith said it also will be a "great refresher" for seasoned firefighters.

It also allows firefighters in Grant County's city and rural departments to complete training required for

state certifications.

Kevin Brock, Blue Mountain Ranger District assistant fire management officer, noted the benefit to the community and the fire service.

"As wildland firefighters, we value the local city and rural firefighters as structural experts," he said. "We are very thankful for the long-standing and close-working relationship between our agencies."

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Capital Bureau

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