

County targets businesses selling vaping products

BY CINDY YINGST
The Columbia Press

A lack of oversight is contributing to one of the biggest health threats facing Clatsop County's teenagers: vaping.

Oregon requires a license to own a dog or sell Christmas trees, but retailers selling tobacco and nicotine aren't regulated. Oregon is one of just nine states without a licensing system.

"This is something we know as a tremendous problem among our young people," County Commissioner Pamela Wev told Warrenton city commissioners recently.

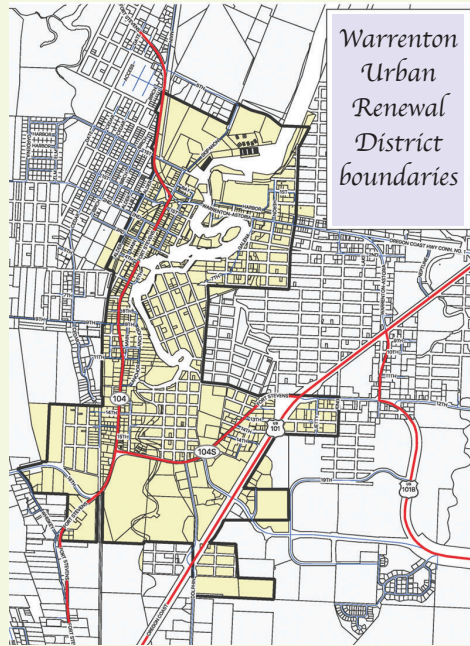
"It's become an epidemic," added Public Health Director Michael McNickle. "Each one of our school superintendents is just flabberghasted by the in-class usage."

Vaping products are often candy flavored, packaged to look like treats and sold in stores adjacent to snack foods, McNickle said. The devices can look like thumb drives and some students use them in class because they're easy to conceal.

A study conducted by the Oregon
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Plan to improve downtown enters new phase

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Warrenton has had success funding its multi-year plan to improve downtown and is doubling down on efforts to raise even more money during the final years of the plan.

With plenty more to do and more tax money coming in than originally expected, the city must take legal steps to put additional projects and a spending plan in place.

"The original purpose in 2007 was to fix up downtown," said Kevin Cronin, Warrenton's Community Development director. "They largely have not done that."

A huge portion of the early tax money was spent at Warrenton Marina.

"We have to make good on our promise to the folks who supported the original urban renewal plan," Cronin said.

The Urban Renewal District was created in 2007, carved out of 870 acres in the heart of downtown. The district's 1,106 parcels represent 7.6 percent of the city's acreage. Yet those parcels bring in 11.4 percent of the city's property tax revenue.

During its first 12 years, the district has "outperformed" or raised more money than expected. As property owners within the boundaries built and made improvements – and as the economy improved – additional tax money flowed into urban renewal district coffers.

The idea behind an urban renewal district is to use tax money raised in the district to improve public facilities such as streets, sidewalks, the sewer system and parks. The improvements are designed to encourage rehabilitation of both

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Plans to revive downtown include placing power lines underground, paving the lot between the fire station and the future home of Arnie's Cafe, shown here under construction, providing loan guarantees for expanding businesses, and adding landscaping and lighting.



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