

Tiffany Bowden Cannabis Coverage

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Midwest Cannabiz Classes Start This Weekend

HT [hightimes.com/news/midwest-cannabiz-classes-start-this-weekend/](https://www.hightimes.com/news/midwest-cannabiz-classes-start-this-weekend/)



As an increasing number of states work to [legalize marijuana](#), entrepreneurs all across America are searching for business opportunities to help them achieve their dream of building an empire in the cannabis industry. Unfortunately, with the federal government hell bent on prohibition and legal marijuana states being regulated by varying degrees of legislation, it can be difficult to launch a marijuana startup.

It is for this reason we are seeing a number of marijuana workshops and [cannabis colleges](#) popping up all over the country, teaching ambitious ganjapreneurs the ins and outs of this burgeoning industry. One in particular, the Comfy Tree Cannabis Academy, is preparing to tour the Midwest in order to educate curious cannabis enthusiasts in Kentucky, Georgia and Illinois on what it takes to successfully enter the field of medical marijuana.

Comfy Tree co-owner Tiffany Bowden says their business and legal workshop is a highly beneficial tool for anyone considering a career in the cannabis industry, even for entrepreneurs living in states where marijuana laws have not experienced much reform.

“For the people who are in the places where they don’t have plant legislation or decrim laws, they can still get involved in the cannabis industry,” said Bowden. “And that helps them to get a foot in the door and build a brand up for themselves until the legislation comes though.”

During this weekend’s seminar in Owensboro, Kentucky, Comfy Tree will host several cannabis experts from across the country who will provide in-depth presentations about the many facets of the medical marijuana and retail hemp industry. “We have at least two cultivators that will be coming in talking about things like quality control and seed to

sale,” in addition to basic cultivation techniques,” said Bowden. “So if you’ve never grown anything ever before, the cultivation lecture will be invaluable.”

More experienced growers will benefit from listening to expert from Denver-based GrowHire, who will speak in detail about the cultivation of terpenes, which Bowden says is an important aspect of growing medical marijuana that many aspiring growers do not fully understand.

Apeks Supercritical will also be on hand to give a lecture on CO2 extraction systems: a crucial crash course for anyone in Kentucky planning to work in medical marijuana once it becomes legal. “The way the industry is going, everybody is going to likely ending up having to use CO2 extraction versus, say, butane or other methods within the state regulated market,” said Bowden, adding that people need to be aware of the high costs involved with purchasing these extraction systems.

Marketing and advertising is another important topic Bowden says will be touched on throughout the day. “People need to know ahead of time that you can’t just throw up a shop and expect that the products are going to sell themselves,” she said. “It is a very difficult industry to market within, given the FCC regulations and their federal tie in.”

However, one of the most vital subjects Comfy Tree will use to enlighten attendees is investor relations and financing. “Funding is one of the largest issues in the industry, and we understand that,” said Bowden. “The work is getting done through angel investing, primarily, and being able to connect with individuals who are willing to invest in your cannabusiness or network with teams that already have some resources behind them, that’s kind of critical. We’ll be introducing that opportunity to people there, as well.”

Bowden says in states like Kentucky, where medical marijuana is only legal for research purposes, she often finds individuals are eager to learn what type of business they can get into immediately, without having to wait for legislation to pass. This is where she says retail hemp comes into play. “Whether they want to work from home on the Internet, or if they wanted to have a traditional brick-and-mortar kind of business. We can help them with all of those things,” said Bowden, adding that a retail hemp business may be the most advisable option in Kentucky until the state makes additional changes to its marijuana laws, which she insists is coming sooner rather than later.

“We do have some high hopes for both Ohio and Kentucky in their progress,” said Bowden, who believes it is wise for people to get in on the medical marijuana market before legalization happens. For example, the CBD trials set to get underway at the University of Louisville and University of Kentucky will require peripheral assistance, she said. Patients involved with that study “Will still need information in terms of where to go and they will need information as it relates to the medication,” which means there is a wealth of opportunity available at this point in the game.

Medical Marijuana: It’s Personal, and It Will Be Legal Across the Nation

The inception of the Comfy Tree Cannabis Academy happened shortly after Bowden, a PhD student at the University of Illinois, discovered that her father had been secretly medicating with cannabis before he died from kidney failure several years ago. She says she watched him use marijuana to replace much of his prescription pain medication. “Because I was able to see all of that, it really opened up my eyes to explore further,” said Bowden. “It helped me and others see the medical benefits. Not just the recreational aspects, but the true medical benefits.”

Not unlike other marijuana proponents, Bowden strongly supports the legalization of marijuana because she, too, feels it is a safer alternative to many of the legal substances people consume on a regular basis. “I don’t think cannabis is any more harmful than alcohol,” she said. “I think alcohol does a lot more damage.” Yet, while she is not at all opposed to recreational marijuana, Bowden does feel the smartest way to move forward in the industry is to approach legalization from a medicinal standpoint, “just because of the way that politics tend to be,” she said.

Many lawmakers have predicated the United States will experience nationwide legalization with the next decade, which is something Bowden agrees will happen, but not like most are anticipating. “I’d say we’ll probably go medical

within that time,” she said. “I would be really surprised if it went full on legal — I would be excited to see it.”

One of the primary reasons Bowden thinks the US will not be ready for a fully legalized marijuana commerce within the next ten years is because there still a great deal of misinformation being spread that must first be overcome. “Even people who are in support of the movement, they don’t necessarily know what to do to get the job done,” she said. “So, we have people, for instance, in Kentucky waiting to vote on something, where there is not a vote in Kentucky — they actually have to pick up the phone and call their legislators.”

Bowden also attributes the subtle nuances between the goals of both political parties that prevent us, as a country, from a more rapid progression towards the end of prohibition. “People should be thinking more big picture,” she said. “The more the people see the revenue coming in from the taxes, and that replaces the revenue that’s coming from the prison industrial complex, I think that things will move a lot quicker.”

Do Law Enforcement and Cannabis Workshops Collide?

Some people interested in attending a cannabis workshop in a small community, like Owensboro, where even low level marijuana possession often leads to jail time, might not be comfortable joining the upcoming Comfy Tree event for fear their presence may lead to harassment by the local police. However, Bowden says they have never experienced a situation where law enforcement has attempted to shakedown or cause a hindrance to their seminars in any way. “There are a lot of law enforcement officers that think it is a complete waste of time for them to spend their time running around catching marijuana users for simple possession,” she said. “So, they are actually on the side of legalization and sensible policy. There are some, obviously, that are not necessarily in that loop, but it has not been my personal experience that they’ve been trying to hold us back from doing anything.”

Comfy Tree Cannabis Academy will be in Owensboro, Kentucky on August 2, 2014 from 10am-7pm. Tickets for the day-long seminar start at \$149.99. They will also be in Atlanta on September 20 and then in Chicago. To learn more about Comfy Tree and to reserve your space at one of their workshops, visit the website: www.hellocomfytree.com

Mike Adams writes for stoners and smut enthusiasts in HIGH TIMES, Playboy’s The Smoking Jacket and Hustler Magazine. You can follow him on Twitter @adamssoup and on Facebook/mikeadams73.

Image from 420truth.files.wordpress.com.

Cashing in on Cannabis

E ebony.com/career-finance/cashing-in-on-cannabis

3/26/2015

As the green rush takes over America state by state, Black entrepreneurs may want to consider making the most of selling marijuana (legally). Find out why.

by #teamEBONY, March 26, 2015

When Stacy Pope attended her first cannabis entrepreneurship meet-up in Atlanta last September, she didn't know at all what to expect. "I was surprised that so many other business owners were interested in the industry. That really sparked my curiosity," says the beauty salon owner.

EBONY

But her decision to enter the legal cannabis market was solidified just days later when she saw a viral clip featuring the head of the Alaska Cannabis Club (ACC) and KTVA-TV reporter Charlo Greene quit her on-air position—during a live broadcast—to focus on her passion. "I was captivated by it. From that point on, I jumped in," says Pope.

After months of research, the Atlanta resident is now considering a move to Colorado, where she can not only do hair but also work in a cannabis dispensary to learn more about the field. Obstacles, however, abound: Pope lacks the funds to make a seamless transition, and the stigma against the formerly illegal industry has prevented her family from being supportive. "I'm sad that it's so difficult, but I believe this is part of my legacy," she shares. Pope, who wants to have her new business operating by the end of 2015, is motivated to enter the legal marijuana trade while the fire is hot and as a way for her to possibility create intergenerational wealth.

Read more in the current issue of EBONY Magazine!

In D.C., fears of chaos grow as legal pot nears

www.washingtonpost.com/local/dc-politics/high-times-are-headed-for-dc--and-a-whole-lot-of-cannabis-chaos/2015/02/15/f6d49ade-b137-11e4-886b-c22184f27c35_story.html

By Aaron C.
Davis



D.C. could legalize pot as early as Feb. 28, with no regulation or means for legal sale. One D.C. entrepreneur sees financial opportunity in chocolates infused with hemp oil or, eventually, the active chemical in pot. (Astrid Riecken/For The Washington Post)

The District of Columbia could soon earn a new nickname: the Wild West of marijuana.

In 10 days, a voter-approved initiative to legalize marijuana will take effect, D.C. officials say. Residents and visitors old enough to drink a beer will be able to possess enough pot to roll 100 joints. They will be able to carry it, share it, smoke it and grow it.

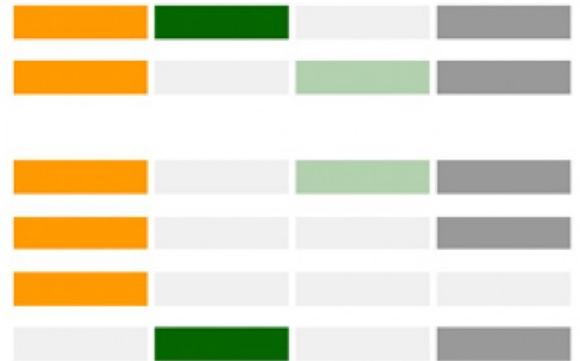
But it's entirely unclear how anyone will obtain it. Unlike the four states where voters have approved recreational pot use, the District government has been barred from establishing rules governing how marijuana will be sold. It was prohibited from doing so by Congress, which has jurisdiction over the city.

In December, after voters overwhelmingly approved a referendum to legalize pot use, opponents in Congress tried to upend the result by blocking any new rules establishing legal ways to sell it, protections for those caught purchasing it or taxes to cover its social costs.

D.C. officials say that Congress’s action did not halt the initiative, but it did set the city up for potential chaos. Barring last-minute federal intervention, the District’s attorney general said that pot will become legal as early as Feb. 26 without any regulations in place to govern a new marketplace that is likely to explode into view.

[View Graphic](#)

The status of marijuana laws across the nation.



Even some supporters of the initiative are worried. At best, they predict an uncertain free-for-all where marijuana enthusiasts immediately start growing and smoking at home — and testing the limits of a law that does not allow for public consumption or sale. At worst, they say, as entrepreneurs push ahead with the business of pot, unregulated businesses will start popping up with no means to judge the safety of their product.

Two ballrooms on Capitol Hill are already reserved for a pot expo on Feb. 28. A date for a massive marijuana seed giveaway is in the works for early March. Some are planning “cannabis clubs” with membership fees and access to the plant. Others hope to offer high-end catered dinners cooked in marijuana-infused oils; recently, an underground test dinner was served a mile-and-a-half north of the White House.

“Where can it be bought? Sold? Eaten? Smoked? We’re not going to have answers to any of that, and that makes me very concerned,” said D.C. Council member David Grosso (I-At Large). And as the consequences play out in the nation’s capital, he said, it could set back the entire movement: “Let’s be responsible about how we do this so we don’t have a negative image coming out.”

D.C., Congress play chicken

In Colorado and Washington state, voter-approved ballot measures making pot legal prompted state leaders to create highly regulated industries, with far more rules than those governing the sale of alcohol or cigarettes.

In Colorado, every marijuana plant grown for sale must be tagged with radio-frequency identification and tracked from seed to sale. Washington state is even more restrictive, setting caps for how many stores may sell pot and requiring reporting of every milligram that goes out the door to consumers.

“The District will be unique because you can’t technically sell cannabis directly,” said Tiffany Bowden, co-founder of ComfyTree, a pro-legalization group that is hosting the expo, where more than 200 marijuana companies, consultants and entrepreneurs are scheduled to display their goods.

“All that means is the traditional dispensary model as we know it will not happen,” Bowden said. “But that doesn’t mean the cannabis industry is going to be asleep. It’s actually going to be thriving in Washington.”

Melvin Clay of the D.C. Cannabis Campaign holds a sign urging voters to legalize marijuana at the Eastern Market polling station in Washington on Nov. 4. (Gary Cameron/Reuters)



If that prediction comes true, the plethora of pot will thrust the nation’s capital into an unparalleled legal and law-enforcement quandary. And it will be the direct result of Congress’s willingness to exercise its constitutional power to interfere with local laws.

Originally, District leaders had planned to create a similar set of rules. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) said flatly the day after her election — and the approval of Initiative 71 — that she would not allow it to become law until the city approved rules for taxing and selling the plant.

But Bowser’s stance changed in December, when congressional Republicans inserted a restriction in a budget bill blocking the District from doing so.

Boxed in by Congress, Bowser and D.C. Council Chairman Phil Mendelson (D) said they would rather err on the side of supporting city voters. With little ability to control what might come next, they declared the ballot measure “self-enacting.”

With Bowser’s blessing, Mendelson sent Initiative 71 to Capitol Hill to start a congressional review period imposed on all new city laws. Mendelson was essentially throwing down a gauntlet, challenging Congress either to take action to block Initiative 71 altogether or to let the city govern itself.

The review extends for 30 legislative days. Based on Congress’s current meeting schedule, the last day for federal lawmakers to act now stands at Feb. 26.

After that, the published law of the city will allow residents and visitors 21 and older to possess up to two ounces of marijuana — about a Ziploc bag’s worth. District residents will also be able to cultivate the plant in their homes — up to six seedlings each and up to three plants to maturity. Conservatives in Congress have warned that the initiative will not be valid. They say the budget language passed in December already suspends Initiative 71, and they have no plans to take further action before Feb. 26.

It may be left for the courts to decide. A lawsuit could come from a D.C. resident or from the Justice Department, which under President Obama has allowed legalization to move forward in four Western states.

Many unanswered questions

How the city will prepare to enforce the new law remains a work in progress.

D.C. Attorney General Karl A. Racine’s office has given the police department guidance for how to implement the law, according to two city officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity because it is not yet clear if the department will follow all of the recommendations.

The guidance calls for District police to not arrest or issue fines for pot possession or use it as a pretext to investigate other criminal behavior. But there are many areas that will probably not become clear until litigated, the officials said.

Bowser’s administration has sought to draw little attention to the coming deadline, in hopes that it will come and go, as one administration official said, “without the sky falling.”

Grosso said he met with Bowser on Friday and raised a host of concerns about what happens at the end of the

month. “For one, I asked what happens when a restaurant or a club has a smoking section outdoor and people light up? Do you arrest them? . . . I didn’t get an answer to that question.”

Other questions: What happens when someone who lives in federal public housing in the District lights up? Under current federal law, residents can lose their housing for a single drug violation. And, has there been any coordination, he asked, with the District’s many federal law enforcement agencies? Marijuana possession will remain punishable by up to a year in jail if found on someone on the Mall, in Rock Creek Park or in almost any city traffic circle, since they are the provinces of the U.S. Park Police and others.

A senior Bowser administration official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the enforcement protocol is still under review said the mayor probably will soon begin to make the case to D.C. residents that they should smoke or cultivate pot only at home. If they carry it in public, they should keep it in their pockets. Anything more, the official said, would risk a run-in with police.

Corey Barnet, head of District Growers, a cultivation center for medical marijuana dispensaries in the District, said it may be difficult for police to prove a marijuana sale. His biggest concern, he added, is the possibility of unsafe or chemically enhanced pot that could make consumers sick.

Adam Eidinger, who organized the petition drive to get Initiative 71 on the ballot, said the odds of dangerous marijuana are low. He is more concerned about police not clarifying aspects of enforcement, such as whether marijuana can be grown on balconies, or only inside residences.

He also is concerned about entrepreneurs going too far to profit off distribution. The safest way to enjoy the initiative, he said, is to grow marijuana yourself.

“It’s legal, you can go do this, enjoy it,” he said. “But if you buy it and get caught, you’re technically breaking the law. I hope they would make that a low priority, but the sharing of marijuana will be legal.”

Want pot? Join the club.

The public expo at a Capitol Hill hotel could offer a glimpse of just how ambiguous the rules are. With the District set to become the first major East Coast jurisdiction to legalize possession, marijuana companies believe it could become a hub for the flow of pot — once they figure how to shield buyers and business owners from possible charges related to buying or selling the plant.

One of the most likely scenarios, said Malik Burnett, D.C. policy manager for the Drug Policy Alliance, which advocates for liberalizing U.S. drug laws, is the proliferation of “cannabis clubs.” Under such arrangements, a District resident or visitor may pay a membership fee to an organization where marijuana is freely exchanged.

“If you look at Spain, this is how it works,” Burnett said. “Spain has these social clubs that are totally nonprofit entities. They are private, you pay to the social club a membership fee, and they cultivate, grow and allow you to consume marijuana for free as a member of the social club. There is a whole blueprint for this that is totally a real possibility for the District.”

Bowden, of ComfyTree, said several expo presenters plan to discuss how entrepreneurs in the District could operate subscription or cooperative-type businesses inspired by Colorado’s lesser-known “caregiver” medical marijuana law. That law allows caregivers to obtain marijuana for family members or patients.

“They can’t technically sell cannabis directly, but it does allow for donations to the organization,” Bowden said. “Most people think of the dispensary retail shops when they think of Colorado, but more often, they are not, they are home-based businesses,” she said. “They can make money — they just can’t make it on the direct sale.”

Businesses could also sell a different product, such as a dinner, and “give” away the pot, she said.

“You have a home-based operation, maybe you do a food thing or massages . . . say you sell cookies. They are very expensive cookies — \$50-a-month membership . . . you work out the rest out on the back end,” Bowden said.

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One entrepreneur who will attend the expo is a former federal contractor who now runs a concierge wellness program in the District.

He has filed for a business license in the District and has begun practicing in his kitchen how to infuse chocolates with cannabidiol oils — mostly hemp-related substances that do not produce psychoactive effects.

It’s a placeholder business that could transition to infusing chocolates and other foods with tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, the active chemical in pot.

The business owner spoke on the condition of anonymity because he is unsure where the legal lines will fall. “Some of the things that I am involved with are borderline, they are gray areas,” he said. One of those was a test run recently with a four-course meal in which the olive oil, canola oil and coconut oil used to cook each dish were infused with THC.

“We don’t have the same cannabis culture that Colorado has. . . . It’s not going to be all people smoking joints,” he said. “We have a lot of people in this city who came here to work really hard. They are going to want a different experience. With the city’s restaurant scene, I think there is going to be a lot of opportunity in this space.”

Cannabusiness: Workshop to bring lessons from Colorado's pot industry to D.C. entrepreneurs

bizjournals.com/washington/blog/2015/02/cannabusiness-d-c-workshop-to-bring-lessons-from.html

Tina Reed Staff Reporter *Washington Business Journal*

Davis Clayton Kiyo is always struck by how well-to-do Washingtonians have liquor cabinets, all fully stocked with luxury glassware, expensive spirits and rare bottles of wine. "It's a social thing. It's impressive," he said.



But accoutrements for smoking enthusiasts — we're talking marijuana as well as tobacco products — are hidden away. To change that, Kiyo launched D.C.-based smoking and vaping company **Myster High End Smoking**, designing attractive stainless steel "stashtrays" and woven blunt wraps. And he's among the entrepreneurs planning to gather at a District hotel later this month eager to take advantage of D.C.'s budding marijuana industry.

"They say the people who made the most money in the gold rush were the people that sold the tools," Kiyo said. "That's my thought here."

Michigan-based **ComfyTree**, which refers to itself as a traveling pot business school, says experts at its workshop will help marijuana entrepreneurs navigate the shaky legal and business ground in the wake of D.C.'s legalization initiative. There will also be an expo for networking and a job fair at the event, to be hosted at the Holiday Inn Washington Capitol Hotel, 550 C St. SW, Feb. 28 and March 1. The event costs range from about \$90 to \$300 to attend based on how much of the workshop an individual plans to attend.

The fast-growing marijuana market is making a sizable economic impact elsewhere so far. For instance, in Colorado, the marijuana industry generated \$66.2 million in medical and retail sales for \$7.74 million in tax revenue last year. According to a study from **The ArcView Group**, an Oakland, California-based cannabis industry investment and research firm, the U.S. market for legal cannabis grew 74 percent in 2014 to \$2.7 billion. That comes from a recent post by my colleague **Kasra Kangarloo** about a D.C. entrepreneur who went on **Fox Business Network** to discuss her "Bloomberg for marijuana" idea.

D.C. is poised to take advantage of that market after voters passed a legalization measure despite questions about the implementation of that law **following a challenge from Congress**. The voter-approved measure would allow people over 21 to possess up to 2 ounces of marijuana for personal use and grow up to six cannabis plants. Congress passed a rule barring D.C. from spending any of its own money to enact that law, but supporters of the measure say that doesn't stop the law from simply going into effect.

While the law does not allow store sales, pot advocates say legalization for home cultivation still opens **plenty of business opportunities** in the District. Industries that stand to sprout from marijuana legalization include consultants who help set individuals up with home-cultivation rooms, as well as attorneys, tax experts and security professionals. Creative professionals making accessories or marketing new products also stand to gain.

"It's a sign that people are looking at D.C. as a land of opportunity," **Adam Eidenger** of the D.C. Cannabis Campaign said of the workshop events.

Eidenger plans to reopen his D.C. head shop, Capitol Head, a business he said he was pressured to close by city officials several years ago over concerns the sale of marijuana-related products was skirting the law. He said he is in talks for a new lease in Adams Morgan. He believes more people will move to the city because of the sea change regarding pot. And he sees further potential for residential building owners to take advantage of the presumed

allowance of home cultivation by adding and charging for greenhouse space.

While the ComfyTree event is meant to highlight opportunity, it's also to remove the green-colored glasses that accompany the expansion of "cannabusiness," said [Tiffany Bowden](#), who runs ComfyTree.

People don't really understand the laws and they don't understand how expensive it is to enter the industry, she said. For example, [Fast Company reported](#) on the difficulty of entry into the markets in Colorado and in Nevada (which has legalized medical marijuana) where license fees and regulatory requirements can add tens of thousands of dollars to startup costs.

"Some people think they are going to open up a storefront and make a lot of money. That's not how it works. There are high failure rates that are not publicized," Bowden said. "That's why we are bringing this to D.C. because we want to make sure this industry is successful."

Workshop on legal marijuana to be held in Louisville

 kentucky.com/news/business/article44465097.html

By Janet Patton - jpatton1@herald-leader.com

Intrigued by the legal marijuana industry? ComfyTree Cannabis Academy is coming to Louisville on Jan. 11 with a traveling seminar on everything from lobbying to growing for the market to running a dispensary. A spokesman said that about 30 participants had signed up by Friday.

Kentucky state Sen. Perry Clark, D-Louisville, has said he plans to refile the Gatewood Galbraith Bill, which would legalize medical marijuana in Kentucky, for the upcoming legislative session. A petition on MoveOn.org in support of the bill had 4,219 signatures on Friday morning. The goal is 5,000 signatures.

House Speaker Greg Stumbo, D-Prestonsburg, said in September that he is "leaning toward supporting the use of medical marijuana" and wants to see the issue debated.

For more information on the cannabis workshops, which start at \$149.99 a person, go to Hellocomfytree.com.

KY Senator pushes for medical marijuana legalization - WDRB 41 Louisville News

41 wdrb.com/story/24423004/ky-senator-pushes-for-medical-marijuana-legalization

KY Senator pushes for medical marijuana legalization

Posted: Jan 11, 2014 3:49 PM Updated: Feb 21, 2014 3:08 PM

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (WDRB) -- 20 states and D.C. have legalized medical marijuana. Now a Kentucky state senator is ready to bring a bill to the table.



Jaime Montalvo was arrested in 2011 for growing marijuana, but he says he's not a criminal. He suffers from multiple sclerosis and uses the drug to ease his pain.

"I never really feared the prosecution up until the time it happened. It helped muscles spasms, it helped me sleep," said Montalvo.

He says the benefits outweighed the legal consequences. Now, he's fighting to legalize the drug for medical purposes in the state of Kentucky.

Montalvo says, "Thousands of the people that do support it are afraid to come out and support because of the same problems I have, they don't want to be arrested for it, they don't want to lose their children, they don't want to lose their jobs."

"You ask yourself a question, is cannabis medicine? Yes or no are the only two answers, and the answer is yes," said Kentucky Senator Perry Clark.

Senator Clark has introduced a compassionate care bill twice before. He's hoping the third times a charm.

"We are moving in the correct direction, we have a lot of people who were adamantly opposed to us three years ago that have seen a lot of evidence," said Clark.

But people are concerned about what really happens when state legislature legalizes medical marijuana.

Martin Cothran is the senior policy analyst at The Family Foundation. He says he witnessed it first hand in California.

Cothran says, "They're passing out cards saying that you can get medical marijuana for things as trivial as jet lag and stress."

He says we don't need to fuel the fire of drug abuse, and legalizing medical marijuana should not be a priority.

"This is a controversial piece of legislation what we really do need is something like tax reform but these other proposals out there, medical marijuana, expanded gambling, all these issues are going to suck the political oxygen out of the air and its going to detract from things we need to do," said Cothran.

But Montalvo would tell you differently, he says legalization would help him live a better life.

There is an educational seminar about medical marijuana today at the Galt House where you can meet some of the people you just heard from in person.

Cannabis Academy starts at 10am and goes until 6pm. You can register for the event at the door.

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Cannabis seminar held in downtown Cincinnati Saturday

[wlwt.com/article/cannabis-seminar-held-in-downtown-cincinnati-saturday/3539203](http://www.wlwt.com/article/cannabis-seminar-held-in-downtown-cincinnati-saturday/3539203)

2/1/2014



CINCINNATI —

An advocacy group held a cannabis seminar in Cincinnati Saturday.

ComfyTree Cannabis Academy is a traveling seminar geared toward raising awareness and providing education about a growing market in the U.S.

That market is in the legal marijuana industry.

The academy made its stop at the Millennium Hotel in Cincinnati.

While medical marijuana is not currently legal in Ohio, the Ohio Rights Group has been actively campaigning to put medical cannabis on the ballot in 2014.

ComfyTree consultants shared best practices from already legalized states to prepare local enthusiasts for what may come to the region.

ComfyTree workers educated prospective industry entrants on specialized topics like the process of acquiring a medical marijuana dispensary, patient card, cultivation center and more.

They also taught traditional topics like marketing, advertising, finance and activism as it relates to the highly-specialized cannabis industry.

“When people get into this industry, (they think) it's a get-rich quick scheme. They think they can just open up a dispensary and all of the sudden they're going to be a millionaire. We are here to educate people about how they

can position themselves in the market so they can have a sustainable business. A lot of dispensaries actually close because they don't have these fundamentals down," academy spokeswoman Tiffany Bowden said.

In addition, they provided an overview of the industry's local and federal laws so that future participants can be compliant.

More information about ComfyTree can be found at the company's [website](#).

Citizens of Washington D.C. Nervously Await Marijuana Legalization

JDJournal.com/2015/02/16/citizens-of-washington-d-c-nervously-await-marijuana-legalization/

By Noelle
Price



Summary: *Both law enforcement and citizens of Washington, D.C. are unsure how new marijuana laws will be enforced.*

According to the Washington Post, Washington, D.C. may soon be known as the “Wild West” of marijuana.

In just ten days, a voter-approved initiative to legalize marijuana will become effective. This means that both residents and tourists who are at least 21 years of age will be allowed to have enough marijuana to roll 100 joints. The new law will allow these individuals to grow marijuana, smoke it, share it with others, and carry it on their person.

[According to some, marijuana is the fastest-growing industry in the United States.](#)

However, it remains unclear as to how individuals will obtain the pot. The D.C. government has been prohibited from creating rules governing how pot will be sold. Congress, which has jurisdiction over D.C., has prohibited it from establishing these rules.

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In December, a majority of voters approved the referendum to legalize the use of marijuana. After the vote, Congress tried to upset the results by blocking rules that would create ways to sell marijuana, that would establish taxes to cover the social costs, or that would provide protections for those who are caught buying marijuana. According to [Wikipedia](#), both recreational and medical marijuana is fully legal in Alaska, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington.

According to officials in Washington, Congress' moves did not stop the initiative, but instead paved the way for chaos to take over the nation's capital. Unless last minute federal intervention arises, marijuana will be legal as early as February 26—without any sort of regulations in place to control the new marketplace.

Those who support the referendum are even concerned. They worry that unregulated businesses will open their doors without the safety of their product being monitored. The best-case scenario, according to the supporters, would be for residents to grow and smoke the marijuana at home, since the new law does not allow public consumption or sale.

A pot expo scheduled for February 28 has already reserved two ballrooms on Capitol Hill. A tremendous marijuana seed giveaway is being put together for March. Some are even creating “cannabis clubs” that will charge membership fees and provide access to marijuana. Some others even want to offer high-end catered dinners that are prepared in marijuana-infused oils. The underground test dinner was served less than two miles from the White House.

[Texas has introduced a bill that would decriminalize marijuana possession.](#)

D.C. Council member [David Grosso](#) (I-At Large) said, “Where can it be bought? Sold? Eaten? Smoked? We’re not going to have answers to any of that, and that makes me very concerned. Let’s be responsible about how we do this so we don’t have a negative image coming out.”

In Washington state and Colorado, the voter-approved ballot measures that legalized marijuana triggered the creation of regulated industries. These industries have more rules than those that control the sale of cigarettes or alcohol.

For example, marijuana plants that are to be sold in Colorado must be tagged with a radio-frequency identification. The location of the plant is tracked from seed until the sale. In Washington, the rules are even stricter: limits are set on how many stores can set pot, and those stores must report every single milligram of marijuana that leaves its site.

Tiffany Bowden, the cofounder of ComfyTree, a group that favors the legalization of marijuana, said, “The District will be unique because you can’t technically sell cannabis directly.” ComfyTree will host the expo, where over 200 marijuana entrepreneurs, consultants, and companies are expected to display their products and services.

Bowden added, “All that means is the traditional dispensary model as we know it will not happen. But that doesn’t mean the cannabis industry is going to be asleep. It’s actually going to be thriving in Washington.”

If this hypothesis is correct, the abundance of marijuana will toss D.C. into a legal predicament, all due to Congress’ exercising its constitutional power to interfere with local statutes.

At first, D.C. leaders planned to create rules. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) informed the public the day after she was elected that she would not allow Initiative 71, the voter-approved referendum, to become law until rules for taxing and selling marijuana had been approved. However, Bowser’s position changed in December when Republicans restricted the budget bill, blocking D.C. from creating such laws.

Bowser and D.C. Council Chairman Phil Mendelson (D) explained that they would rather err on the side of supporting the city voters. They decided that the ballot measure is “self-enacting.” In addition, according to the [Huffington Post](#), the wording of President Barack Obama’s federal budget may allow D.C. to enforce the law using local funds.

Mendelson then sent the initiative to Capitol Hill to begin the congressional review process on all of the new city laws. Essentially, Mendelson was telling Congress to either block the initiative or allow D.C. to govern itself.

The review lasts for 30 legislative days, meaning that the last day federal lawmakers can act will be February 26.

After that date, the law will allow residents and visitors over 21 years of age to possess up to two ounces of marijuana. This is roughly a Ziplock bag's worth of pot. Residents will also be able to grow the plant in their homes, but with a limit—no more than six seedlings each, and only three plants may be grown to maturity.

Conservative members of Congress have said that the initiative will not be valid. According to these members, the budget language that was approved in December will suspend Initiative 71, and they have no plans to act further before February 26.

The issue may go to the courts for a decision. Either a resident of D.C. or the Department of Justice could file a lawsuit. The Justice Department has allowed legislation in four western states to proceed.

[Some law schools have even introduced marijuana law courses.](#)

How the city anticipates enforcing the new statutes remains to be seen. The office of [Karl A. Racine](#), the attorney general of D.C., has stayed busy: it has provided the police department guidance on how to apply the new law. According to anonymous city officials, the police have been directed not to arrest or fine individuals for possession. They have also been directed not to use possession as a reason to investigate other criminal behavior. According to the officials, many nuances of the law will not be clear until they are litigated.

Bowser's office has stayed quiet about the fast approaching deadline, and remains hopeful that the date will come and go "without the sky falling."

Grosso noted that he had a meeting with Bowser on Friday and brought up several concerns as to what will occur at the end of this month. He said, "For one, I asked what happens when a restaurant or club has a smoking section outdoor and people light up? Do you arrest them?...I didn't get an answer to that question."

Those in public housing will also need further guidance on the new law. Currently, those who live in federal housing can lose their housing privileges for a single drug violation. Further, coordination with federal law enforcement needs to be addressed, since marijuana possession is punishable under federal law for up to a year if found on a person in Rock Creek Park, on the Mall, or in city traffic circles.

Do you think D.C. will be able to govern itself on this issue?

[View Results](#)

A senior Bowser administration official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that the major will probably soon encourage residents to smoke or cultivate marijuana only in their homes. If they do decide to carry it in public, they should keep it in their pockets, since anything more may risk a confrontation with the police.

Corey Barnet is the head of District Growers, a cultivation center for medical marijuana dispensaries in D.C. Barnet predicts that it will be hard for police to prove the sale of marijuana. His concern is that marijuana may be unsafe or laced with other drugs that can make purchasers ill.

Adam Eidinger, who organized the petition drive to get the initiative on the ballot in December, said that it's unlikely that marijuana will be dangerous. Eidinger is concerned about police failing to clarify the details of enforcement, such as whether the plants may be grown on residential balconies, or if all growing must occur indoors. Another concern of Eidinger's is that entrepreneurs will take things too far to profit. Therefore, the safest way to enjoy the new law, he explains, is to grow marijuana yourself. He said, "It's legal, you can go do this, enjoy it. But if you buy it and get caught, you're technically breaking the law. I hope they would make that a low priority, but the sharing of marijuana will be legal."

The upcoming expo at the Capitol will demonstrate the confusion with the rules. Since D.C. is the first major jurisdiction on the east coast to legalize possession, marijuana companies predict that it will become a hot spot for

marijuana. First, however, they have to determine how to protect buyers and business owners from charges related to either buying or selling marijuana.

Malik Burnett, the D.C. policy manager for the Drug Policy Alliance, which fights for the liberalization of drug laws, said that a likely scenario will be “cannabis clubs.” Members will pay to be a part of an organization where pot is freely exchanged.

Burnett explained, “If you look at Spain, this is how it works. Spain has these social clubs that are totally nonprofit entities. They are private, you pay to the social club a membership fee, and they cultivate, grow and allow you to consume marijuana for free as a member of the social club. There is a whole blueprint for this that is totally a real possibility for the District.”

Bowden said that several presenters will discuss the possibility of subscription or cooperative-type business that are inspired by Colorado “caregiver” laws, under which caregivers may obtain marijuana for family members or patients.

Bowden commented, “They can’t technically sell cannabis directly, but it does allow for donations to the organization. Most people think of the dispensary retail shops when they think of Colorado, but more often, they are not, they are home-based businesses. They can make money—they just can’t make it on the direct sale.”

Another possibility would be to “give away” marijuana in addition to offering other paid services, such as dinner or massages. “You have a home-based operation, maybe you do a food thing or massages...say you sell cookies. They are very expensive cookies—\$50-a-month membership—you work out the rest on the back end.”

One such entrepreneur is a formal federal contractor who operates a concierge wellness program in D.C. He has filed for a business license and has started practicing at home how to infuse chocolates with cannabidiol oils, which are mostly hemp-related oils that do not have any psychoactive side effects. The business could transition to infusing chocolates and other edibles with THC, marijuana’s active chemical.

The business owner, who requested to remain anonymous, said, “Some of the things that I am involved with are borderline, they are gray areas. We don’t have the same cannabis culture that Colorado has...It’s not going to be all people smoking joints. We have a lot of people in this city who came here to work really hard. They are going to want a different experience. With the city’s restaurant scene, I think there is going to be a lot of opportunity in this space.” The business owner recently tested a four-course meal using canola oil, coconut oil, and olive oil infused with THC.

Source: [Washington Post](#)

Activists Prepare For Marijuana Legalization To Take Effect

dcist.com/2015/02/activists_optimistic_marijuana_lega.php

by [Matt Cohen](#) in [News](#) on Feb 23, 2015 3:37 pm



L to R: D.C. Cannabis Campaign's Nikolas Schiller, Adam Eiding, and Dr. Malik Burnett outside the D.C. Board of Elections. Photo by Matt Cohen.

By all accounts, marijuana legalization will take effect at the end of this week. At least, that's what Adam Eiding is expecting.

"Really we have to wait for the D.C. Register to have it published as a law," says Eiding, who chairs the D.C. Cannabis Campaign—the grassroots organization responsible for getting Initiative 71 on the November ballot. "Though once that happens I would think the Republicans will jump on that."

Ever since Initiative 71—which will allow District residents to legally possess up to two ounces of marijuana—was overwhelmingly passed through a voter initiative, lawmakers and residents alike have feared that some members of Congress would prevent it from taking effect, as they're [wont to do](#). There was even that [rider](#) in the House Appropriations Committee's \$1.1 trillion spending bill barring the District from implementing marijuana legalization.

But the legislation was submitted to Congress for the 30-day review period and it's looking like it'll pass, which begs the question: what happened?

In his budget plan proposal, President Barack Obama sneakily backed pot legalization and a controversial abortion law with the inclusion of [just one word](#). But it wasn't Obama who saved Initiative 71 (after all, that was just a proposal), D.C. Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton says that "unless a resolution of disapproval overturning it is enacted during that period or other legislation is enacted before, during or after that period that blocks or overturns it." Nothing like that has happened.

Furthermore, House Republicans all but gave up on preventing Initiative 71 from taking effect and instead focused their efforts on preventing the District from setting up any sort of legislation to tax and regulate the sale of marijuana in the same vein as alcohol. In fact, a planned public hearing on a proposed marijuana tax and regulate bill was downgraded after warnings from D.C. attorney general Karl Racine, who [wrote in a letter](#) to the Council that holding the hearing would "violate a spending probation."

But the future of marijuana legalization in the District isn't of high concern for Eidinger and the Cannabis Campaign. "We've won the Initiative, we won legalization without commercialization," he says. In addition to possession, Initiative 71 allows for the home cultivation of marijuana, along with allowing to trade it with other pot users.

Next weekend, D.C. play host to its first marijuana-related convention since Initiative 71 passed. [The ComfyTree Cannabis Academy, Grow School and Job Fair](#), which is sponsored by the Michigan-based marijuana education company, will take place at the Holiday Inn at Capitol Hill on Saturday and Sunday. Throughout the weekend, speakers—which include Eidinger and Councilmember David Grosso (I-At Large)—will discuss growing and policy tips and advice.

But a big part of the conference also includes other speakers who will give "expert advice on getting into the cannabis-business." As far as Initiative 71 goes, the sale of marijuana is not permitted, which leaves a lot of questions, Grosso, who first introduced a proper tax and regulate bill, [tells the Post](#).

Grosso said he met with Bowser on Friday and raised a host of concerns about what happens at the end of the month. "For one, I asked what happens when a restaurant or a club has a smoking section outdoor and people light up? Do you arrest them? . . . I didn't get an answer to that question."

Other questions: What happens when someone who lives in federal public housing in the District lights up? Under current federal law, residents can lose their housing for a single drug violation. And, has there been any coordination, he asked, with the District's many federal law enforcement agencies? Marijuana possession will remain punishable by up to a year in jail if found on someone on the Mall, in Rock Creek Park or in almost any city traffic circle, since they are the provinces of the U.S. Park Police and others.

Eidinger says he has a solution for local lawmakers to skirt the tax and regulation problem that Congress is hung up on preventing: Make medical marijuana that much easier for residents to obtain. "That's Muriel Bowser's secret weapon that she has to make this all work out," Eidinger says. "She could simply tell the Department of Health 'I'd like you to propagate new rules that say recommendations for cannabis are only needed for people under 21.'"

Currently, D.C.'s medical marijuana laws have established a proper taxation and regulation system, with a few grow centers already growing and selling medical pot. Though the District recently [made it easier](#) for anyone to get a doctor recommendation for medical marijuana, it's still not as liberal a program as California's program.

Still, marijuana legalization is set to take effect soon, which, in and of itself, is a huge deal for the city. Whatever the future may hold for marijuana policy in the District, the Cannabis Campaign will celebrate their victory. In their homes, without any exchange of money, as the law states.

Legal haze: D.C. pot users face questions as deadline expires this week

 [reuters.com/article/us-usa-marijuana-districtofcolumbia-idUSKBN0LR1RQ20150223](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-marijuana-districtofcolumbia-idUSKBN0LR1RQ20150223)

By [Ian Simpson](#) | WASHINGTON

Marijuana advocates' hopes that the U.S. capital would easily follow in the footsteps of Denver or Seattle in clearing the way for lawful pot use are set to go up in smoke this week.

Voters in the District of Columbia last year passed a measure clearing the way for pot possession, but members of Congress have used their power over the city to prevent local officials from coming up with any plan to let the drug be sold legally for recreational purposes.

With the congressional review period for the new measure set to expire on Wednesday, District of Columbia pot users will be left in a murkier position than those in Colorado and Washington state, which fully legalized marijuana last year.

"What you're going to have on Feb. 26 is an anomaly. You can possess a small amount ... but you can only get it, I guess, illegally," said Eleanor Holmes Norton, Washington's non-voting representative in Congress. "It's going to be an incomplete reform."

The uncertainty stems from Initiative 71, a referendum approved by 65 percent of District voters in November. A key argument by supporters was that marijuana laws unfairly victimized black people in Washington, who represent about half the city's population.

Initiative 71 allows possession of up to two ounces (56 grams) of marijuana and six pot plants, three of them mature. It allows the gift of up to one ounce (26 grams) of pot, but has no provision for sales.

District finance officials have estimated the local market, including medical marijuana, could be worth \$130 million a year.

CONGRESSIONAL OPPOSITION



Pedestrians pass by a DC Cannabis Campaign sign in Washington in this November 4, 2014 file photograph. REUTERS/Gary Cameron/Files

Initiative 71 ran into opposition in Congress, which has oversight over the heavily Democratic District of Columbia. Republicans inserted a provision in a spending bill in December that barred the District from using any funds to legalize pot.

Democratic Mayor Muriel Bowser has contended that the District of Columbia can move forward with legalization because voters enacted the measure before Congress stepped in.

But Representative Jason Chaffetz, the chairman of the House of Representatives Oversight and Government Reform Committee, has vowed to block legalization, citing the December spending bill.

"I respect the people who live here and most everything passes through without a problem. But the idea that this is going to be a haven for pot smoking, I can't support that," Chaffetz, a Utah Republican, told CNN this month.

When District of Columbia Council committees debated a bill to regulate marijuana like alcohol, lawmakers downgraded the Feb. 9 hearing to an informal "roundtable discussion" to avoid raising objections from Congress.

Chaffetz responded last week by sending a letter to the council asking for an explanation of the hearing and documentation, including details on the salaries of any city employees who took part.

Asked what Bowser, the mayor, will do when Initiative 71 takes effect on Thursday, a spokeswoman said, "Right now, it's on a to-be-determined basis."

CANNABIS CONVENTION

A spokesman for District Attorney General Karl Racine declined to give details about what advice he had offered officials about the new pot law.

Also In U.S.

- [U.S. judicial panel finds Texas hurt Latino vote with redrawn boundaries](#)
- [Arkansas executes first inmate in 12 years](#)

But Racine, police and other officials "are very much committed to ensuring the transition to the regime enacted by Initiative 71 takes place in an orderly manner," he said in an email.

Dr. Malik Burnett, policy manager with the pro-legalization Drug Policy Alliance, said he expected District of Columbia officials would figure out how to regulate sales and taxes despite congressional opposition.

"This process will be worked out over the next couple of weeks or months. I'm pretty optimistic," he said.

Burnett said it was unlikely that users of medical marijuana from outside the District of Columbia could get pot in Washington since the city lacked reciprocity accords for medical marijuana use.

Despite marijuana's uncertain status, District of Columbia entrepreneurs are gearing up for legalization.

A convention in Washington the coming weekend sponsored by ComfyTree, a Michigan cannabis consultancy, has drawn at least 600 registered visitors and 40 exhibitors, said Tiffany Bowden, the company's co-founder.

"Definitely, the District of Columbia is the next frontier for legalization," she said.

The District of Columbia now has one of the lightest U.S. penalties for pot possession. Marijuana possession remains illegal under federal law, but the Obama administration's Justice Department has generally taken a hands-off approach in states where its sale is properly regulated.



Der US-Hauptstadt droht Cannabis-Chaos

[nachrichten.at/nachrichten/weltspiegel/Der-US-Hauptstadt-droht-Cannabis-Chaos;art17,1657650](https://www.nachrichten.at/nachrichten/weltspiegel/Der-US-Hauptstadt-droht-Cannabis-Chaos;art17,1657650)

WASHINGTON. Konsum, Anbau und Besitz von Pot erlaubt – Verkauf und Besteuerung bleiben unreguliert.



Die Debatte um das Rauchen von Joints geht weiter. Bild: epa

Für Ende des Monats hat die Marihuana-Industrie zwei Ballsäle auf dem Capitol Hill angemietet. Längst schon gibt es keine Stellplätze für Interessenten mehr, die auf der "grünen" Expo ihre Produkte und Dienstleistungen vorstellen wollen. Mehr als 200 Unternehmen haben sich angesagt, um die Chancen des Pot-Geschäftes in der amerikanischen Hauptstadt auszuloten.

Gesprächsbedarf besteht reichlich. Denn während der Konsum, Besitz und Anbau von Cannabis zu diesem Zeitpunkt erlaubt sein wird, gibt es keinen legalen Markt dafür. "Der District of Columbia ragt gewiss heraus", vergleicht die Mitgründerin der Pro-Legalisierungs-Organisation "ComfyTree", Tiffany Bowden, die Situation in der Hauptstadt mit jener in Colorado und Washington State, die als erste Bundesstaaten der USA Pot legalisiert und umfassend reguliert haben. "Das klassische Modell eines Verkaufs in spezialisierten Läden funktioniert hier nicht."

56 Gramm Cannabis erlaubt

Der eine Grund dafür ruht in der "Initiative 71" selbst, die von den Einwohnern Washingtons vergangenen November mit überwältigender Mehrheit angenommen wurde. Sie erlaubt jedem Bürger, aber auch Besuchern der Stadt, die alt genug sind, ein Bier zu bestellen, einen Joint zu rauchen. Großzügig bemessen ist auch die Menge an Cannabis, die man legal besitzen darf. 56 Gramm füllen einen kleinen Butterbrot-Beutel und reichen für gut 100 Joints aus. Genug, um mit Freunden die "grüne Freude" aus dem Heimanbau zu teilen.

Was ebenfalls zulässig ist: Bis zu sechs Marihuana-Pflanzen dürfen privat kultiviert werden. Alles andere bleibt vage. Oder ist – wie etwa Direktverkäufe – nicht vorgesehen. Die neue Bürgermeisterin von DC, Muriel Bowser, versprach in der Wahlnacht, sie werde die zahlreichen Lücken der Initiative mit klaren Regeln füllen. Ohne Vorschriften für den Verkauf und die Besteuerung werde Volkes Wille nicht in Kraft treten.

Paradoxe Weise rief die Ankündigung Bowers die Marihuana-Opponenten im US-Kongress auf den Plan. Die Republikaner nutzten den Sonderstatus des "District of Columbia", um im Jänner alle Mittel für die Umsetzung der Bürgerinitiative zu blockieren.

Die Stadtbewohner zeigten sich über das Hineinregieren des Kongresses in lokale Angelegenheiten so empört, dass sich die Bürgermeisterin zu einer Kehrtwende veranlasst sah. Bowser ließ dem Kongress durch den Vorsitzenden des Stadtrats mitteilen, Washington werde sich an die Vorgabe halten und kein Geld für die Regulierung ausgeben. Gleichzeitig sehe sie sich in der Pflicht, den Willen der Bürger zu respektieren. Mangels anderer Alternativen werde sich das Gesetz deshalb "von selbst in Kraft setzen".

Auch die Polizei ist ratlos

Genau das wird passieren, falls der Kongress bis 26. Februar nicht die gesamte "Initiative 71" kassiert. Ein Schritt, vor dem die Konservativen zurückschrecken, weil sie andernorts die Verteidigung der Rechte der Bundesstaaten auf ihr Banner geschrieben haben. Darüber hinaus sehen sie keinen Bedarf. Der Anhang zum Haushaltsgesetz habe das Referendum schon so außer Kraft gesetzt.

Der Streit wird nun wohl vor Gericht ausgetragen. Bis dahin herrscht in DC Cannabis-"Wild West". Nicht einmal die Polizei weiß, wann sie einschreiten darf oder gar muss. Bürgermeisterin Bowser rät den Washingtonians, Cannabis-Produkte vorerst nur zuhause zu konsumieren.

Mit dieser Variante gibt sich die grüne Industrie nicht zufrieden. "ComfyTree"-Mitgründerin Bowden verrät, es werde bereits über eine Reihe an Modellen nachgedacht, die eine Alternative zum Direktverkauf böten: "Niemand verbietet Spenden." Eine andere Variante sind Cannabis-Clubs. Bezahlt wird für die Mitgliedschaft, Pot gibt es gratis.

Chaos D.C.: Marijuana Becomes Legal Next Week Without Regulations

HT [hightimes.com/news/chaos-d-c-marijuana-becomes-legal-next-week-without-regulations/](https://www.hightimes.com/news/chaos-d-c-marijuana-becomes-legal-next-week-without-regulations/)



The District of Columbia's recently passed voter Initiative 71, which legalized the cultivation, possession and use of marijuana in the nation's capital, has nearly survived its 30-day congressional review and the new law is set to take effect within next week.

Soon, adults 21 and older will be able to possess up to two ounces of weed, grow six plants in their backyard, and give weed away to friends without risking the wrath of a law enforcement shakedown. However, an article published Monday in *The Washington Post* indicates "chaos" could erupt in the wake of legalization because the federal government has hindered the D.C. Council from [exploring a regulatory system](#) to control the market from coming unhinged.

The problem, at least in the eyes of some District lawmakers, is that while cannabis has achieved legal status in the backyard of the White House, there is bound to be an uprising in borderline black market dealings because the law does not come attached with regulations to facilitate consumers in the legal purchase of cannabis.

"Where can it be bought? Sold? Eaten? Smoked? We're not going to have answers to any of that, and that makes me very concerned," D.C. Council member David Grosso told the *Post*. "And as the consequences play out in the nation's capital, he said, it could set back the entire movement: "Let's be responsible about how we do this so we don't have a negative image coming out."

Unlike Colorado, cannabis consumers in the District will not have the luxury of purchasing herb at a local pot shop. Yet, reports indicate that plans have already begun for cannabis clubs, which will provide members with recreational marijuana for an annual fee, while there are rumors that catered cannabis cuisine, paid for through donations, will be offered throughout the city.

Tiffany Bowden with Comfy-Tree, one of the organizers of a Marijuana Expo set to get underway later this month on Capitol Hill, claims these types of businesses are just the beginning for the marijuana market in Washington D.C. “The District will be unique because you can’t technically sell cannabis directly,” she said. “All that means is the traditional dispensary model as we know it will not happen. But that doesn’t mean the cannabis industry is going to be asleep. It’s actually going to be thriving in Washington.”

This deviation from the traditional model, like the system established in Colorado, is what some predict will lead to Chaos D.C. – all due to Congress’ willingness to interfere with the District’s [marijuana laws](#). The fear is that industrious minds have read between the lines of the initiative and are preparing to get a piece of the seemingly non-existent market share when the law comes to pass on February 26.

According to the Post, D.C. Attorney General Karl Racine is guiding the police department on how to handle the new law, but there are still so many unanswered questions, especially with regard to cannabis consumption and the definition of “remuneration.” In fact, during a recent meeting with Mayor Muriel Bowser, Council member Grosso asked her what would happen to someone caught smoking a joint outside a “cannabis club,” and she was unable to deliver an answer.

Interestingly, Initiative 71 was drafted to encourage home cultivation, and was in no way intended to be a stepping-stone to a retail pot market. Yet, while D.C. lawmakers are crippled in their efforts to establish a taxed and regulated pot market for at least the next year, it appears entrepreneurs are preparing to push the envelope of the law in order to capitalize on weed once it is officially legal... but will this equate chaos? Challenges, maybe, but certainly nothing beyond a reasonable solution.

Mike Adams writes for stoners and smut enthusiasts in HIGH TIMES, Playboy’s The Smoking Jacket and Hustler Magazine. You can follow him on Twitter @adamssoup and on Facebook/mikeadams73.

(Photo via [NPR.com](#))

All Eyes On Washington D.C. As Marijuana Legalization Takes Effect This Month

marijuanapackaging.com/blog/all-eyes-on-washington-dc-as-marijuana-legalization-takes-effect-this-month/

2/16/2015



Since the passing of Initiative 71 during the [marijuana elections of 2014](#), marijuana advocates in the country's capital have been patiently waiting to grow, carry, distribute, as well as smoke marijuana. It appears however, that the wait is almost over.

As early as February 28th, if Congress chooses to stay true to the will of the people, Initiative 71 will take effect. What this initiative establishes is that marijuana users over the age of 21 will be able to legally possess two ounces or less of marijuana, cultivate up to 6 plants, transfer of up to an ounce, and use smoking paraphernalia, such as glass pipes and [wax vaporizers](#). Despite certain members of the U.S Congress that have shown fierce opposition to legalization, efforts towards blocking the voter approved initiative have been denied.

Even though this landmark legislation is something that enthusiasts, and patients alike, have been dreaming about since the initiative was passed, some advocates are still worried about the infancy stages of this newly developing market, and the uncertainties of how unregulated marijuana businesses will effect the overall process. "Where can it be be bought? Sold? Eaten? Smoked? We're not going to have any answers to any of that, and that makes me very concerned," said D.C. Council member David Grosso (I-At Large) to the Washington Post.

Unlike Colorado or Washington state that have legalized recreational marijuana, D.C's local government has banned the establishment of rules governing how marijuana will be sold. "The District will be unique because you can't technically sell cannabis directly," said Tiffany Bowden, the co-founder of the pro-legalization group ComfyTree, to the Washington Post.

The fact that marijuana legalization will take effect this month even though there will be no clear regulatory system setup to sustain marijuana businesses, poses a threat to the entire process. At best, citizens can expect a mix between full legalization and decriminalization, which leaves more grey areas than clear distinctions of what's legal and what's not. Regardless of this fact, depending on how successful Initiative 71 is or not, citizens can expect a much calmer climate when dealing with law enforcement on the issue of marijuana.

With marijuana legalization, green rush is on in D.C.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/with-marijuana-legalization-green-rush-is-on-in-dc/2015/02/25/23c3f1de-bc78-11e4-b274-e5209a3bc9a9_story.html

By Marc Fisher , Aaron C. Davis and Perry Stein

As of Feb. 26, 2015 marijuana was made legal in D.C.—sort of. Here are the ins and outs of the complex pot law. (Gillian Brockell/The Washington

Post)

As Thursday dawns on the nation's capital, marijuana will be a legal intoxicant, though Washington will not be Amsterdam, or even Denver. There will be no pot shops, no open-air smoking, but at least for the moment, the District — for once in its decades-long struggle for the right to govern itself — has gotten its way, and a green rush is on.

Despite a last-hours intervention by the Republican chairman of the House committee that handles D.C. affairs, Mayor Muriel E. Bowser and D.C. Council members said Wednesday that they would not back down from implementing the will of the 70 percent of city voters who approved legalization in November.

Now, from private residences where Washingtonians may grow, possess and use small amounts of the drug to shops where budding entrepreneurs plan to sell accessories for cultivating marijuana plants, marijuana will quickly become a more overt part of the capital's culture.

[FAQ: How to stay out of jail now that pot is legal in D.C.]

For advocates of legalization, the idea that weed can be legal in Washington is a breakthrough that will accelerate [a similar embrace of the mind-altering plant](#) in much of the nation. At least five states are moving toward legalization votes next year.

“What you're seeing here is the end of marijuana prohibition, a change in attitudes and a real shift in law enforcement — a huge step forward in the national fight for legalization,” said Michael Collins, national policy manager for the Drug Policy Alliance.

“The nation's capital has an exaggerated impact,” said Keith Stroup, legal counsel at NORML (the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws). “If Washington, D.C., can legalize marijuana and the sky doesn't fall, things will get a lot easier in these other states.”

On the streets of the city, the big change actually took place in July, when the District decriminalized possession of small amounts of marijuana, meaning that someone caught with a joint or two faced a ticket rather than an arrest, handcuffs and a trip to court.

[Dvorak: A mom in a minivan goes in search of a pot party]

Relaxed enforcement

Since July 17, when the penalty for possession of less than one ounce went from up to a year in prison to a civil fine of \$25, both D.C. police and their federal counterparts have essentially stopped going after people who have marijuana for personal use. Arrest data from the U.S. attorney's office, which prosecutes drug offenses in the city, found that marijuana arrests in the District dropped from more than 15 a day to just over one a day after decriminalization.

In the first half of last year, law enforcement referred charges involving marijuana to prosecutors in 2,425 misdemeanor cases and 257 felony cases. From July 18 to the end of the year, arrests dried up, resulting in just 159 misdemeanor and 67 felony cases.

For the most part, D.C. police didn't bother with the new marijuana citations, issuing fewer than 250 of them in the second half of the year. Even in public places, police may no longer use the smell of marijuana as probable cause for an arrest; an officer must directly observe someone smoking to make an arrest.

Bowser: D.C. cannot be bullied on pot laws

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During a televised address, D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser said that marijuana possession would become legal in the District despite threats from House Republicans. (DCN)

Although the federal government owns roughly a quarter of the land in the District, and marijuana remains illegal on any federal property, federal arrests for pot possession have also fallen off a cliff since the city approved decriminalization.

U.S. Park Police reported 501 marijuana "incidents" in 2013, though many of those did not result in arrests. After decriminalization, Park Police were involved in 41 incidents last year, only three of which led to marijuana-related charges.

"Basically, police stopped arresting people, and the government stopped papering, unless it was with another charge, like carrying a pistol," said Betty M. Ballester, head of the Superior Court Trial Lawyers Association, which represents defense lawyers.

Ballester and other defense lawyers have seen a marked change in how prosecutors handle pot cases as the government has repeatedly halted cases that were already in progress.

"They just came in on the day of trial and said they were not ready to proceed," she said. "I think that was a policy decision."

[Decriminalization won support](#) from then-Mayor Vincent C. Gray (D) and council members after a study by the American Civil Liberties Union showed a racially lopsided pattern of arrests for marijuana possession. Although surveys find that whites and blacks use the drug in roughly equal proportions, about nine out of 10 arrests in the District were of African Americans — a larger percentage than in any other major U.S. city.

Although arrests had already plummeted, legalization is nonetheless a pivotal moment for the nation and the city. Recreational marijuana is [already legal in Colorado](#), Washington state and, since Tuesday, Alaska, but Congress's decision to do nothing about the D.C. law during the 30-day review period that expired Wednesday marks a significant turning point, according to both sides of the legalization debate.

"A certain number of Republicans in Congress wanted to block D.C.'s marijuana initiative," said Collins, who lobbies Congress on pot laws. "But the party's leaders don't want Republicans to become known as the anti-marijuana party."

Collins and other lobbyists say Republicans on the Hill fall into three camps — a small group that strongly opposes liberalizing the law because of concerns about health and productivity; a larger group that wants to leave the issue to the states on libertarian and states' rights grounds; and an ambivalent faction that doesn't want to be viewed as falling behind public opinion on social issues.

"This opens the door across the country," said DeForest Rathbone, chairman of the National Institute of Citizen Anti-Drug Policy, a Maryland-based group that favors existing drug laws. "Congress is afraid of acting because everybody thinks marijuana is harmless these days. People are going to regret this."

'Initiative 71 is . . . law'

A [threat from congressmen](#) with authority over the District seemed only to bolster the new D.C. mayor's resolve. Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah), chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, warned Bowser (D) to halt legalization or face "very severe consequences," he told The Washington Post. "You can go to prison for this. We're not playing a little game here."

But Bowser made clear that she is keenly aware of her authority and intends to use it.

"I am the duly elected mayor of the District of Columbia," she said upon taking the stage at a mid-afternoon news conference, during which she announced that the city would "implement and enforce" the law as passed by voters.

[Federal Eye: Pot's legal in D.C. now. Does that change anything for federal workers?]

The city's new attorney general, Karl A. Racine, and several council members stood with Bowser. "Initiative 71 is, in the attorney general's view, law," Racine said.

House Speaker John A. Boehner appeared to steer clear of the D.C. controversy; his spokesman, Michael Steel, said Boehner "deferred to the committee." And Chaffetz's Republican colleagues said they had no plans beyond the rhetorical warning.

"There's no talk of litigation," said Rep. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.), chairman of the subcommittee that handles D.C. affairs. But he warned that it could become "very difficult for D.C." to get the money it needs on other matters. Congress can still act to roll back marijuana legalization through budget language.

Rep. Andy Harris (R-Md.), who earlier sought to block the city from spending money to implement the ballot initiative, said Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. "should prosecute people in the District who participate in this." That seemed highly unlikely in an administration that has repeatedly signaled that it will let states conduct their own marijuana experiments.

Harris said the city's planning for legalization may violate federal law against spending public dollars that haven't been budgeted for that purpose. "Those people ought to be very afraid, because the penalties are severe," he said.

[MAP | Where pot is still illegal: On federal land]

Bowser allowed that "me being in jail wouldn't be a good thing, but making sure that the will of the voters is implemented . . . that's my job and that's what I'm doing."

As the conflict between the city and its federal overseers develops, marijuana's role in city life is already shifting. Although Congress has stopped the council from planning for eventual retail sales, entrepreneurs are charging ahead with plans to sell accessories used to grow and consume the plant.

Adam Eiding, a leader in the legalization campaign, said he will [reopen his Capitol Hemp store](#), which the city forced to shut down two years ago because he sold paraphernalia used to consume illegal drugs.

Eiding said his new store, in Adams Morgan, will sell bongs, vaporizers and hemp products and will be more open about the purpose of its wares. In 2012, "if you said you were going to use the pipe for marijuana, we would tell you to leave," he said. "We don't have to play that game anymore."

A marijuana industry exposition is scheduled to be held at a Capitol Hill hotel this weekend, part of what Stroup, the NORML counsel, called "the green rush." Stroup said his group is getting calls from people who want to get into the business in Washington. He expects some entrepreneurs will test the limits of the law by establishing clubs where users pay a membership fee and are given the drug, in lieu of buying it directly. Bowser has called for legislation to block the formation of such clubs.

“Most marijuana smokers don’t want to smoke on their own at home,” Stroup said. “It’s a social act. So it will be up to the police and then the courts to decide what is public and what is private.”

Capital City Hydroponics, a small indoor gardening shop on Upshur Street NW in Petworth, already sells everything a gardener needs to grow vegetables and leafy greens. Now, said Michael Bayard, the owner, “we’re expecting volume to increase.”

Until now, when Bayard’s customers have come in asking how to grow marijuana, he has told them that he doesn’t provide that service. Bayard, valuing his relationships with local schools, still doesn’t want to be known as a pot store. Until he is sure legalization is here to stay, he won’t use marijuana leaf images in his marketing or openly talk about growing the plant.

“I don’t want to risk our livelihood,” he said. “The D.C. government works in funny ways. If you live here long enough, you know you don’t know what’s going to happen.”

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Still, the store already sells fertilizers with packaging that looks as if it could be on a Grateful Dead poster and products called “Kushie Kush” and “Big Bud.” Bayard expects a rush of customers this weekend; he has ordered plenty of kits that could be used to cultivate marijuana at home. Prices range from \$420 to \$1,250.

Despite legalization, no one expects the black market to dissipate, especially since the D.C. law makes no provision for legal sale of the drug. One District dealer, a 24-year-old whose day job is with a government contractor, said he expects to continue selling about four ounces a week.

He believes that legalization will make it much less likely that he will be caught selling illegally. He said it will now be easier to hold and transport the drug because he’ll limit his own possession to the legal maximum of two ounces. And he expects customers will buy in larger quantities than the standard one-eighth ounce, which he sells for \$60.

“This makes it easier to stay in because it’s safer,” the dealer said.

Mike DeBonis and Peter Hermann contributed to this report.

Weed Is Now Legal In DC. Here's Why Drug Dealers Aren't Worried.

[thinkprogress.org /weed-is-now-legal-in-dc-heres-why-drug-dealers-aren-t-worried-1db30206dc70](http://thinkprogress.org/weed-is-now-legal-in-dc-heres-why-drug-dealers-aren-t-worried-1db30206dc70)

2/26/2015



CREDIT: THINKPROGRESS: DYLAN PETROHILOS

Despite [warnings of potential recourse](#) from House Republicans, D.C. adults aged 21 and up can legally consume marijuana for recreational purposes as of 12:01 a.m. Thursday. Under [Initiative 71](#), individuals can possess two ounces of marijuana, consume it on private property, and share an ounce with a friend.

Residents can also cultivate marijuana plants at home, although doing so is likely to be far too expensive and time-consuming for casual smokers.

Under the new law, people can grow six plants and flower three, but cultivation requires equipment, space, and money to get started. Speaking to ThinkProgress, instructor David DeGraff Hamill of the Grow School in Colorado outlined the steps required to get a plant from seed to harvest—a process that takes three to four months.

Individuals need about 25 square feet for a proper growing enclosure. They also have to purchase the necessary equipment, including a reflector, ballast, light, and exhaust fan, which costs \$800-\$1,400. Thereafter, the electricity and fertilizer used to facilitate growth costs \$400 for three plants.

Three plants can yield 10–18 ounces.

Hamill, who's hosting an educational seminar in conjunction with Comfy Tree in D.C., sees the endeavor as a long-term investment. This weekend, he plans to outline the city's legal regulations, teach grow theory, and walk through the process of watering, fertilizing, and trimming. "It's not rocket science to grow cannabis at home," he told ThinkProgress.

However, a local marijuana dealer expressed the same sentiment as many activists, stating simply, "The average person isn't trying to grow it."

Sitting in his apartment, the D.C. native, who asked to be referred to as Seymour, explained that growing marijuana takes a lot of time and energy that few people are willing to spend. In that respect, Initiative 71's growth provision won't have much of an impact. Seymour started selling pot to his friends when he was 16 years old and makes \$1,000-\$1,500 per week. Over time he's learned that most people want a simple, straightforward way to procure marijuana, so buying and selling in the city tends to happen among inner circles of friends.

Even if businesses were legally permitted to sell pot, as they do in Colorado and Washington, it would be more efficient and cost effective for D.C. residents to stick to the old ways of securing a product. Moreover, people aren't interested in paying taxes, and would rather avoid dispensaries altogether. So with respect to the changes that go into effect tomorrow, "the average person knows about legalization, but doesn't care," he said. An anonymous client, who bought some weed during the conversation with Seymour, had similar views.

Allen St. Pierre, the executive director of National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), agreed. Regardless of whether the consumer is at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder or one of the city's high-profile figures, "the so-called black market will be minimally impacted by the change of law," he said.

"[Elites] have cultivated longtime relationships with an unimpaired marijuana seller," St. Pierre continued. "[Dealers have] a large, somewhat closed network for people to sell cannabis to. Individuals who buy it often have [their seller] visit their home, or they visit the private home of the seller. That's a very hard relationship to interfere with." People also use government and private shipping services to ship products from the West, or simply rely on friends.

Indeed, in states where dispensaries can legally sell recreational pot, it's [still cheaper](#) to purchase marijuana from someone on the street. Businesses that do particularly well are ones with high quality weed, and a wide variety of it. But in Colorado, the unregulated market is still thriving. Since individual street dealers don't have to worry about [licensing fees, taxes, or regulatory expenses](#), many choose not to work for official dispensaries at all.

Should a significant percentage of D.C. residents decide to grow pot at home, however, Corey Barnette sees room for future accidents. Barnette, who owns a medical cannabis cultivation center called District Growers, LLC, contends that most people are uninformed about the growing process, which can be hazardous. "They don't know how to differentiate between harmful substances and substances that are not harmful," he said. "They may not know when to stop using certain substances that may not be harmful in the early stages, but become harmful later on."

Home cultivators could misuse certain extracts, and create a public health risk. To minimize health concerns, Barnette said that Congress and city officials need to legalize official businesses where interested consumers can purchase marijuana products.

Additionally, home grown pot won't necessarily match the quality of weed that D.C. residents have come to expect on the unregulated market. According to Barnette, individuals who cultivate marijuana at home probably won't have the variety that a dispensary can offer.

But for now, the [70 percent](#) of D.C. voters who supported Initiative 71 seem less interested in home cultivation and more excited about the removal of barriers to possession. For African Americans who were [eight times more likely](#) to

be arrested for possession than white consumers, tomorrow officially marks a tremendous victory.

“There really is no need for headlines about [chaos](#) or mass confusion, because there really isn’t that great a change of law at the most fundamental levels,” Allen concluded. “Symbolically it’s terrific. The ability to reduce the amount of minorities and poor that get drawn into the criminal justice system is a terrific benefit from the law changing.”

D.C.'s Weird New Free Weed Economy

T time.com/3722789/dc-marijuana-legalization-congress/

Stoners, rejoice: at 12:01 a.m. on Thursday, stodgy Washington, D.C., became the latest and strangest frontier in the marijuana legalization movement. It's now okay for adult residents of the District to possess two ounces of pot, grow up to six plants in their homes and share their bounty with others.

Here's the wrinkle: there's still no way to legally buy the drug.

Welcome to Washington's weird new weed economy. A clash between the capital's citizens and Congress has left the District without a system dictating how weed can be bought and sold, unlike the first four states that have legalized the drug. Washington has set up a marijuana marketplace without ironing out how the money part will work.

"What we have here is legalization without commercialization," says Adam Eiding, who ran the campaign to legalize weed in the nation's capital. "We have more work to do."

The missing link in the cannabis supply chain means the capital's budding ganjapreneurs are about to get creative. Sure, smokers can take advantage of free seed giveaways and start growing at home. But in the meantime, unless you're among the .003% of DC residents with a license to patronize one of the capital's three medical dispensaries, there's still no way to stroll into a shop and buy pot products. In the absence of traditional commerce, a social marijuana economy is apt to flower.

Related

[Marijuana Activists Arrested Near U.S. Capitol While Giving Out Free Joints on 4/20](#)

According to interviews with industry observers and participants, that may mean the formation of cannabis social clubs, where organizers charge admission to private event spaces where growers freely exchange their greenery. Corporations are discussing the viability of organizing sponsored weed swaps. Weed co-ops and farmer's markets may sprout, just the ones where you get your monthly supply of organic kale or collards.



Entrepreneurs might skirt the sales prohibition by offering health seminars, massages or other services for a fee—and then hand out "free" greenery as a perk. If you're a black-market pot dealer trawling for new clients, there's nothing that prevents you from posting up at a bar or a concert and giving away gratis grams with a phone number on the back of the bag. All an enterprising businessman has to do is plausibly skirt the restriction against directly exchanging pot for money, goods or services.

"People are going to rush into the breach here and try to take advantage," says Allen St. Pierre, executive director of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML). "And some will not do it right."

7 Dizzying GIFs of Spinning Cannabis Strains

Hawgs Breath Type: Indica Lineage: Hindu Kush x Afghani Smell/Taste: Fruity, Earthy, Citrus Effect: Euphoric, Relaxe

All this haziness is partly the product of a clash between D.C. residents and their killjoy overlords. Last November, voters in the District overwhelmingly approved Initiative 71, a ballot measure that legalized pot use. But because of a

rule that bars the city from spending money to implement ballot measures, it couldn't set up a regulatory system. That was supposed to come later, and the city council was ready to proceed, says Eiding. During the lame-duck session, however, a small cadre of Congressmen intervened, preventing the capital from establishing rules to govern the sale and taxation of the drug.

As legalization loomed this week, members of Congress appeared to dangle the threat of jail time over Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser. Republicans Jason Chaffetz and Mark Meadows of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform fired off a letter to Bowser calling D.C.'s decision to proceed with legalization in defiance of Congress a "knowing and willful violation of the law."

Bowser dug in, announcing at a Wednesday afternoon press conference that the city would move ahead on schedule. The legislative branch's attempt to overrule the will of the city is "offensive to the American value of self-governance and ... disrespectful to the 650,000 taxpaying Americans living in the District," says D.C. council member Brianne Nadeau. "If they lock up the mayor, they better take me too."

Rep. Andy Harris, a Maryland Republican who helped lead the fight against the initiative, says Congress doesn't "take lightly interfering in D.C. home rule" and did so only because the District is "making a clearly bad decision."

Harris urged the Department of Justice to intervene to stop the law from taking effect. But he notes lawmakers have little recourse in the matter if that doesn't happen. "I don't know," Harris says. "We're unclear what the next step could be."

Meanwhile, the green rush is on. Over the weekend, more than 1,000 people are expected to descend on a Holiday Inn near the U.S. Capitol for a cannabis convention that includes a trade show, job fair, growing seminar and marketing instruction. The event, which costs up to \$149 for attendees who want to learn to grow their own bud, is being put on by ComfyTree, a business based in Benton Harbor, Mich.

"This is something that will have a dramatic impact on D.C.," predicts Tiffany Bowden, the co-founder and chief happiness officer of ComfyTree. "It's going to be a significant amount of money—not just in terms of your direct transfer of goods, because you're not technically allowed to sell cannabis, but there's also going to be a boom in the hydroponics sector because of the new inspiration for home growing. There's going to be a boom for head shops...There's going to be a boom in peripheral areas—bakeries, edibles, cooking classes."

All that's missing in the Washington pot economy are traditional stores and sellers.

With reporting by Alex Rogers

Hey, D.C.: Are you ready for legalized marijuana? (Video)

 bizjournals.com/washington/blog/2015/02/hey-d-c-are-you-ready-for-legalized-marijuana.html

Beginning 12:01 a.m. Thursday, it will be legal for individuals 21 and older to possess and use up to 2 ounces of marijuana on private property in the District.

As we reported last week, [a marijuana workshop for entrepreneurs](#) will be coming to D.C. this weekend, run by Michigan-based ComfyTree. Davis Clayton Kiyo, owner of Myster High End Smoking, is sponsoring the workshop.

ComfyTree, which refers to itself as a traveling pot business school, says experts at the workshop will help marijuana entrepreneurs navigate the shaky legal and business ground in the wake of D.C.'s legalization initiative.

The workshop and expo will take place Feb. 28 and March 1 at the Holiday Inn Washington Capitol Hotel, 550 C St. SW.

Our Dos and Don'ts for Celebrating Legal Pot

washingtoncitypaper.com/news/city-desk/blog/13069522/our-dos-and-donts-for-celebrating-legal-pot

Emily Q. Hazzard

As of Feb. 26, [pot](#) is legal in the District, with a few caveats. House Republicans [sent](#) a threatening letter to the mayor's office Tuesday, but the city is [moving](#) forward with the law anyway. We're declaring Thursday a weed holiday, so here are our dos and don'ts for celebrating.

Do

- **Why possess it when you can own it?** Adults 21 and over are allowed up to two ounces. Fashion yours into a trendy floral crown, then go bid "good day" to a police officer. Someone will definitely try to steal the weed off your head, however.
- **Get really high!** You can only consume it legally in a home, but tell everyone you've ever met what you're doing, then tweet an "I'm so high" selfie to MPD Chief **Cathy Lanier**.
- **Get really high with your friends!** If every party guest brings their two ounces, you can probably stay baked for about a week.
- **Say thanks.** Your local elected officials are standing up to Congress to enact a controversial law. Now that you can legally give (not sell) another adult up to one ounce, fruit baskets seem passe.
- **Start growing your plants.** [ComfyTree](#) (a marijuana education company) offers a year of support for home growers, so if you get stuck growing your three mature or six immature plants, there's help.
- **Put down the pipe and get back to advocacy.** Initiative 71 doesn't have any rules about taxing or regulating pot, so advocates are working on that now.
- **Get cracking on your business plan.** Entrepreneurs will want to be ready before the city tackles tax and regulate legislation. Step one: "It's like [Uber/Snapchat/Tinder/other] but for weed!" Step two: Profit!

Don't

- **Smoke in public or drive while high.** Still illegal.
- **Take your weed on a romantic picnic, just the two of you.** No marijuana on federal property, which includes lots of D.C. parks and public spaces.
- **Possess it in public housing.** D.C. police won't arrest you, but they're required to report drug use in public housing facilities to federal authorities.
- **Annoy your landlord.** If your rented residence is non-smoking, use a vaporizer, or bake some brownies.
- **Be a bad parent.** **Adam Eiding**, chairman of the [D.C. Cannabis Campaign](#), said it best: "If you're in the same room as your kids, you shouldn't be smoking pot with them. It's inconsiderate to them."
- **Be a minor.** D.C. police will confiscate kids' pot under two ounces and avoid arrests, but any more will get you in more trouble.
- **Try to sell or buy it.** When pot changes hands, you can pay with a hug, a handful of dirt, or the solemn promise that you'll build your supplier a really, really great streetcar, but nothing of actual value can be exchanged in payment.

Photo by Darrow Montgomery

How easy is it to go grow your own pot?

www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/how-easy-is-it-to-go-grow-your-own-pot/2015/02/26/be81bc28-bdcd-11e4-b274-e5209a3bc9a9_story.html

By Adrian Higgins



Adam Eiding plants marijuana seeds at the DCMJ headquarters, which is a private residence, on Thursday. (Astrid Riecken/For The Washington Post)

The District's marijuana initiative offers many pitfalls for the cannabis connoisseur, with strict limits on how much you can have and where you can smoke it.

But the hardest part may be growing the stuff.

Because marijuana sales remain illegal — unlike in states that have legalized recreational or medical use — the District's initiative is based on people growing their own. Or in the mantra of Police Chief Cathy L. Lanier: "Home use. Home grown."

Here's the bad news, potheads: If you start a marijuana plant from seed or a cutting today, you won't be smoking it until about Independence Day. It takes that long to produce the intoxicating buds, even if you have green thumbs.

"I don't think students and others are going to sit around and stare at soil," said Allen St. Pierre, executive director of the Washington-based [National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws \(NORML\)](#). The new rules, putting into place last fall's successful voter passage of Initiative 71, will do little to affect a thriving illicit market for marijuana, he said.

Seeds can cost at least \$10 each and are germinated with laboratory-like care in moist towels before transplanting. This is a variety named Black Jack. (Jorge Cervantes)

[\[Marijuana laws across the nation\]](#)

But he's been waiting a long time for Thursday's conditional decriminalization, and he said he marked the milestone shortly after midnight at his rowhouse in Columbia Heights by placing a few seeds in moistened paper towels, to get them to germinate and grow into something lush and useful.



Lanier and others have made it clear that growing marijuana plants outside is still illegal anywhere in the city: in gardens, on public lands, on rooftops or on balconies. Forcing the cultivation indoors — in theory — doubles your growing season from one a year to two or even three by shortening harvest cycles, but it requires a fairly advanced level of horticultural knowledge, as well as equipment and supplies that can run into thousands of dollars.

One factor is whether you have neighbors who object — or not — to the stench of engorged flower buds. If they do, expect to shell out \$1,200 for a fancy filtration system, said Chris Conrad, an expert witness in marijuana-related court cases and an instructor at the school to which you wished your parents had sent you, Oaksterdam University — the cannabis college — in Oakland, Calif.

I asked him why I couldn't raise marijuana as I do my cabbages, under cheap shop lights in the basement. He pointed out that my cabbages eventually go outside to that ultimate grow light, the sun, but any indoor cannabis plants would have to be raised under high-intensity discharge lights that draw 1,000 watts and cost at least \$300 apiece. You have to buy ballasts and hoods as well. The lamps gobble energy and emit loads of heat, so you need a cooling system, too. Your six plants, he said, would need more energy each day than an entire family.

Add growing mix, expensive feeds and other needs — possibly a sound system to play them, I don't know, the Grateful Dead or Snoop Dogg — and you can spend a thousand bucks or more.

Conrad said you can buy starter kits with growing tents and less-potent lights, costing perhaps \$500, but your yield would be much reduced. I think I'll stick with the cabbages.

Assuming St. Pierre's seeds all germinate — some may be too old to be viable, he conceded — he will have to plant them into larger containers as they grow, ultimately in three-gallon pots.

Corey Barnette, who owns one of three medical-marijuana cultivation centers in the District, predicted that the new recreational initiative will induce many to try their hand at growing — but that few will stick with it.

"Just like the many thousands of people who love beer, most people don't brew their own beer," he said. In other words, you may have kicked that rent-paying hipster out of the growing room and spent hundreds of dollars and many weeks of your life growing ditchweed, and at the end of the day wished that you had just gone to that guy on the corner.

Part of the challenge is the peculiar nature of *cannabis sativa*: Each plant is male or female, and only the unpollinated female flowers produce the buds loaded in THC-rich resin, the compound that induces the high.

It takes about eight weeks for a plant to be ready to be tricked into flowering. At that point, the grower reduces lighting from 18 hours a day to 12. The plant thinks the days are getting shorter and races to bloom. As the gender of the flower buds then becomes evident — this takes two to three weeks — growers tend to discard the male plants. Once you have a known female plant, you can use that for cuttings, knowing that it will bud.

The District's initiative allows a resident to grow three plants to mature budding stage and to keep three at a vegetative stage. But to do that, the grower has to establish two separate growing areas to control the different light requirements. Many growers use opaque tents to regulate hours of light and prevent accidental light pollution for budding plants. Needless to say, this isn't a casual hobby for people who like to travel.

"One of the problems of indoor lighting is you can't have light bleeding into it from anywhere else," Conrad said. "You have to seal it off."

D.C. residents who meet the growing rules (age 21 or older) and, where required, have a permissive landlord or mom, can possess two ounces of marijuana or receive as a gift not more than one ounce.

Another problem, St. Pierre said, is that the initiative doesn't address where one might lawfully obtain seed or a cutting. He calls this conundrum one of "the immaculate conception."

Once you grow your own, you can make your own cuttings, but they would then count in your total plant allowances — a couple could grow 12 plants.

Seed of potent, high-quality varieties are available on the Internet and through the mail, but buying them would run afoul of federal law, said George Van Patten, who has written about 20 books on cannabis cultivation under the nom de plume Jorge Cervantes. Seeds of choice varieties can cost \$10 or more each.

The D.C. government, facing resistance from conservative lawmakers in Congress, has not adopted a regulatory framework that would permit the creation, licensing and taxing of commercial growers and retailers. Hence, the reliance on homegrown marijuana.

Today's Headlines newsletter

The day's most important stories.

"This law in D.C., by any definition, is incomplete," St. Pierre said.

He doesn't know how his grow will turn out, but he doesn't hold out a great deal of hope for his batch or those of like-minded D.C. residents.

"This is going to be laborious, and I don't think it's going to meet many people's expectations, frankly," St. Pierre said. "I go into it with trepidation, even though I have a library at my disposal and can contact the best cannabis cultivators in the country."

"A lot of people will try, but just as we have seen in California, people don't have the time, effort and discipline to be getting at anything," said Barnette, who runs [District Growers](#) in Northeast Washington and is a speaker at a marijuana-growing convention this weekend organized by a company named [ComfyTree](#). A regulated growing industry would require growers to list the ingredients and potency of edible products and the purity of buds, Barnette said.

"That's why you don't buy vegetables from your neighbor," he said. "You go to the grocery store."

DC Cannabis Expo Preps Attendees for Green Rush

mjnews.com/dc-canna-expo-preps-green-rush/

3/3/2015



By Meghan Cahill

Washington, D.C. – At first glance, the [ComfyTree Cannabis Expo](#) held Saturday, February 28, 2015, at the Holiday Inn Washington-Capitol Hotel in Southwest, appeared to be a typical Washington, D.C., conference. It was in a hotel, there were plenty of out-of-towners networking, and there was a registration area. However, it only took a few seconds for an onlooker to realize it wasn't your run-of-the-mill D.C. summit. The ComfyTree Cannabis Expo is a traveling full-day conference dedicated to helping local entrepreneurs get ready for the green rush.

Mixed with the professionally attired attendees at the conference were dreadlocked hippies, bong-lined product tables, a young woman with a marijuana hair clip selling her Stinky Steve children's books (Stinky Steve is your cannabuddy, here to explain medical marijuana safety to kids whose loved ones use it), and ComfyTree staff adorned with marijuana leaf-stamped t-shirts handing out marijuana leaf-stamped bags.

Walking towards the conference area, attendees passed the office of FEMA's Department of Homeland Security. Once this moment of irony passed and one took an even closer look, it was evident this expo was held during a monumental moment in the District's history and its fight for statehood via recreational marijuana legalization. It was also apparent that conference sponsors and speakers are making a lot of legal money with marijuana ventures. Expo entrepreneurs and conference attendees alike are all on the cusp of the green rush gamble, one that might actually pay out for those willing to take the risk.

Residents of Washington, D.C., [voted to legalize](#) recreational marijuana this past November. Despite Congress' control over the District's laws and its hopes of making the law void, the Council of the District of Columbia defied Congress. Initiative 71 was enacted on Thursday, February 26, 2015.

The District's new homegrown marijuana initiative was clear motivation for many local residents to attend ComfyTree's event. Medical marijuana has been legal in the District for some time under strict regulations, and now citizens want to prosper from the financial opportunity that might take place in their own backyards.

D.C. Council member David Grosso was on hand to discuss his stand for the voter-approved legalization and the steps that brought him and the District to their current Initiative 71 status. The ACLU's report [The War on Marijuana in Black and White](#) pushed Grosso and other local politicians to support decriminalizing marijuana after reading that even though there is an almost equal 50/50 split of marijuana usage among blacks and whites, a

disproportionate 91% of those arrested for marijuana in D.C. are African-Americans.

“The medical [marijuana] question was not one that was necessarily motivated from a racial justice perspective as much as the [decriminalization initiative] was; and obviously, for me, legalization is. But [medical marijuana] was a first step ... a really powerful first step in D.C. to show that the sky didn't fall when we had medical marijuana here and that it wasn't that big a deal,” said Grosso. “It allowed us to move to the next step.”

The District's current recreational legalization of marijuana is not taxed and regulated, and it is illegal for citizens to buy cannabis for recreational purposes. It is more or less a behind closed doors, trade your cannabis with a friend type of situation. Grosso stated D.C.'s states' rights issue bluntly:

“Well the good Congress pretty much sucks ... D.C., we are the only city in the country and the world that doesn't have representation in Congress and has no voting power up there. But [Congress] oversee[s] our function.” He continued, “So basically we pass laws in the Council. We pass the budget, and then it goes up there [to Congress] for review. Ninety-nine percent of the time it just comes back after a layover period of 30 days or 45 days. Every so often, though, we have a member of Congress that, on some hot button issue, wants to get engaged in D.C. to get some points back in their own district. And this is where marijuana is kind of an interesting question.”

Regardless of this political quagmire, local citizens came to the conference to learn from experts who are already making money in the industry so they will be prepared for their next business venture if and when the purchase of recreational cannabis becomes legal in the District.

Corey Barnette, owner and operator of [District Growers](#), a registered medical marijuana cultivator based in Washington, D.C., shared some tips at the “Marijuana 101” session. He addressed how to run a successful marijuana dispensary through solid business practices and sound market insights. As far as a dispensary business model goes, if the sale of recreational marijuana becomes legal in D.C., he believes that strategy and developing a niche product will be the key to success. “There are some people out there that just want to be the low cost high volume provider. I think it's a horrible business strategy in the cannabis world,” said Corey. “You can sell your Hyundai. I'll sell my Beemer.”

Initiative 71 allows the District's residents to grow up to six marijuana plants (three mature) at a time in their home, possess two ounces of cannabis in their home, give one ounce to a friend in their home, and consume cannabis within the walls of one's D.C. home. Note the importance of the word home. The possibility of accidentally possessing marijuana on federal land in D.C. is high, as federal sidewalks, monuments and parks are woven throughout the city. If you possess marijuana on a federally designated space, you are committing a federal offense and may be subject to some serious jail time.

Regardless of the ambiguities in Initiative 71, the conference's expo room was packed with local and national advocates touting the District's marijuana legalization win and its financial opportunities. Alongside the stereotypical marijuana paraphernalia product tables, the surprising standouts were not stoners and pipes.

The expo was overflowing with sleekly logoeed booths manned with professionally dressed investment and insurance executives looking to back or support legal marijuana businesses; Orange County software gurus connecting cannabis customers to their perfect strain based on personal mood and user reviews via the Leafly app; and entrepreneurial product tables filled with hemp energy drinks, creative clothing lines, protein bars and lighting systems. Businesses, investors and brands were at this conference to make money or to learn how to make money.

The “Run your Cannabusiness like a Fortune 500 Company” session's first two speakers were Micah Tapman, Partner and Program Manager of [CanopyBoulder](#), and Scott Greiper, President and Founding Partner of [Viridian Capital & Research](#). For those looking to find the capital to support their cannabusiness, this was the go-to team to learn how to get financial backing from investors. Turns out, it's not unlike acquiring financial support for most businesses.

Tapman gave simple advice on what he needs to see from a potential cannabusiness investment opportunity. “[I’m looking to see] if you can work well with others and can you convince anyone your ideas are good.” The easiest way to do this is have a business partner or partners, even if it’s a friend, neighbor or family member. If you have at least one person on your team, it shows you can work with others and that your idea has been accepted as a good business opportunity. Then, Tapman said, you must validate your idea. “I’m not going to believe you until you take a survey with 100 people.”

Greiper, an investment banker and analyst straight from Wall Street, hammered home that the industry is growing incredibly fast and most investors are new to this game, including him. Viridian was founded in 2014. For cannabusinesses to succeed they need the proper financial know-how, and his company can provide the CFO and COO expertise for companies looking to fill that void. “What’s lacking [in cannabusiness] is seasoned professional executives,” said Greiper, “the Achilles heel.” He stated that the industry is an infant in terms of age but gaining participants fast. “Now there are [approximately] 200 public cannabis companies. Three years ago, there were only five.”

The one-day conference [agenda](#) was packed with informative investment, legal, business and current events sessions that were sandwiched in between several speed rounds of speakers. All sessions took place in a chandelier-adorned banquet room packed with 150 to 200 attendees throughout the day. Attendees were mostly advocates, media and those looking to make money responsibly.

In addition to the sincere attendees, there were a handful of get-rich-quick schemers, those so novice to the cannabis industry that they were unfamiliar with common terminology (one audience member asked what would happen when he picked up his “medicine” from a collective – did you pick up “your plant?”), a few stoned stereotypes, and a few shamelessly self-promotional people asking poorly veiled questions to hawk their own product or service. However, the majority of attendees simply wanted to learn how to set up a cannabusiness or invest in cannabusinesses despite the industry’s nebulous legal issues and stigmas.

If you want to learn how to set up a cannabusiness before marijuana is legal in your state, the ComfyTree conferences are a good place to start. If you decide to attend, do your homework in advance and refine your situational awareness skills so you can find opportunities that are right for you.

D.C.'s pot expo: Less Cheech and Chong, more Berkshire Hathaway

www.washingtonpost.com/local/dcs-pot-expo-less-cheech-and-chong-more-berkshire-hathaway/2015/02/28/c0f5d13c-bde7-11e4-bdfa-b8e8f594e6ee_story.html

By John Woodrow
Cox

It's all business at D.C.'s 'Cannabis Academy'



[View Photos](#)

City hosts a two-day expo to teach attendees how to make greenbacks from pot's legalization.

In a chandeliered banquet hall not far from the U.S. Capitol on Saturday, a man with a Duke MBA and a Wall Street background offered the same sort of tips often given to aspiring entrepreneurs in places like this one: develop a clear business plan; raise enough capital to weather setbacks; find a niche and own it.

Listening were 150 or so people packed into rows of cushioned red-and-gold chairs at the District's first "Cannabis Academy," an event perfectly timed to capitalize on the rush from the city's newly legalized marijuana-growing marketplace. But the stereotypical images of stoner culture — leaf-adorned Bob Marley flags and smoky photos of piled-high pot — were, by design, nowhere in sight at the Holiday Inn. The crowd-members, more gray-haired than long-haired, sipped coffee and thumbed through 100-plus page workbooks with categories such as "Legal" and "Accounting & Merchant Services."

Less Cheech and Chong, more Berkshire Hathaway.

And for good reason. Attendees had paid up to \$299 each for instruction on how to get rich, not high, in an industry that a recent report said could generate [\\$35 billion a year by 2020](#) if the wave of marijuana legalization continues.

So, on the first weekend since pot became [lawful in D.C.](#), the city is hosting ComfyTree's two-day training session and job expo to prepare the nation's capital for the "Green Rush," a term used for the deluge of financial opportunity expected to follow pot legalization. How green that rush will actually run in the District, of course, remains unclear given that the city [still prohibits](#) pot from being bought or sold.

This convention, though, isn't just a how-to. The academy's polish and professionalism attempts to persuade skeptics that the marijuana industry belongs not inside hazy basements or beneath darkened bleachers, but instead in the commercial mainstream, alongside wine, liquor and beer.

The academy was created by a University of Illinois Ph.D student and a finance manager at a Fortune 500 company. It was organized by a public relations veteran who has planned D.C. conferences for heads of state. Its expo was attended by the subsidiary of a Washington state firm that invests exclusively in cannabis companies and expects to amass \$75 million in its latest round of fundraising.

"The industry is changing," said Micah Tapman, one of Saturday's presenters. "This isn't about showing up in a tie-dye T-shirt and long hair to pitch to an investor."

Tapman, a retired Marine with an MBA from George Washington University, is a partner at Canopy Boulder, a company in Colorado that has raised \$1.2 million to invest in and accelerate the growth of "cannabusinesses," as they're often called.

The bustling expo, expected to draw about 1,000 people over the two days, had a broad range of commercial enterprises: everything from security systems to insurance, from clothing brands to energy drinks.

The academy and its sponsors represent, in a sense, a classic attempt to re-brand a product still haunted by the ghosts of "[Reefer Madness](#)". But it won't be easy. Throughout the afternoon, the expo's main room smelled of its star product, and some people wandered around visibly stoned.

Still, the industry's leading entrepreneurs have developed Web sites as refined as those of big-money private equity firms, and they talk more about policy, regulation and taxes than they do about strains, effects and highs.

D.C.'s marijuana law, explained

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As of Feb. 26, 2015 marijuana was made legal in D.C.—sort of. Here are the ins and outs of the complex pot law. (Gillian Brockell/The Washington Post)

Even terminology is carefully managed, with pot, weed and dope avoided in favor of a more clinical moniker: cannabis.

'Trying to get a foothold'

Behind a table at the expo's center stood a guy in a dark beard, black-rimmed glasses and a baseball cap adorned with the image of a man smoking a blunt while flying a bicycle. It is intended to evoke the iconic scene from "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial" — because Rico Valderrama's clothing brand, "Phone Homie," is also a play on the film's famous line, "phone home."

As two men sifted through a stack of his stickers, a woman nearby overheard Valderrama, 38, discussing trademark issues. She handed him a white business card.

“Mindy B. Pava,” it read. “Kelley Drye & Warren LLP.” Pava is an associate attorney at the law firm, which has offices from D.C. to Los Angeles.

“This is a big up-and-coming industry,” she told him. “We’re interested in seeing if there’s any legal needs for these companies.”

Her firm, she said later, expects the burgeoning market to create a multitude of new revenue streams for law practices. New companies will need help understanding zoning laws, tenant rights, labeling guidelines and corporate real estate.

Her pitch spoke to a big question that lingered throughout Saturday’s event: How do District entrepreneurs legally profit off of pot if they can’t legally buy or sell it?

Some have suggested “pot clubs” in which people pay for a membership to participate in some other activity (knitting, for example) and are “gifted” pot. And though D.C. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser submitted [emergency legislation](#) this week to prevent that exact activity, cannabis entrepreneurs doubt such enterprises can be prohibited.

But the law does allow residents to home-grow up to six marijuana plants, three of which can be mature at once.

Daniel Funk, 37, works in construction and anticipates many D.C. residents will want to grow their own — though perhaps fewer will want to undertake the involved process of installing the necessary equipment.

That, Funk hopes, is where he’ll come in. “I’m just trying to get a foothold,” he said, gripping a stack of business cards.

Meanwhile, in the expo room’s farthest corner, a crowd had gathered around an object that looked like an extra-large white vase capped with an inverted saucer.

“ROOT” is, in simple terms, an automated growing device — which looks more like a sculpture — and can hold up to four plants, depending on their size. It’s priced at \$299 and is scheduled to ship to consumers by year’s end, according to its creators, each of whom boasts a degree from the University of Pennsylvania — one in mechanical engineering, the other in architecture.

‘Trainwreck’ and ‘AK-47’

For aspiring entrepreneurs, the industry’s murky future is a double-edged sword. While ever-evolving and unpredictable legislation increases their risk, it also allows them to exist. If the market was suddenly stable, it could attract massive institutional investors so powerful that smaller players couldn’t compete.

The legal cannabis market grew from \$1.5 billion in 2013 to \$2.7 billion in 2014, according to research by the ArcView Group. That’s a significant leap, but probably still not enough of one for a private equity fund to invest, say, \$500 million. Instead, the growth has prompted an invasion of fortune-seeking MBAs.

Still, despite the new presence of ties and wingtips, the industry may never fully shake its bleary-eyed, not-so-adult, giggles- and munchies-inducing image in American culture.

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Daily headlines about the Washington region.

The District’s top strain of pot, for example, is called “Trainwreck,” according to user ratings on Leafly (essentially the

Yelp of marijuana). Other national favorites include “Green Crack,” “Girl Scout Cookies” and “AK-47.” Compare those to some of the country’s most popular wine brands: Beringer, La Crema and Clos Du Bois.

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Washington's pot expo: Less Cheech and Chong, more Berkshire Hathaway

 dallasnews.com/news/news/2015/02/28/washingtons-pot-expo-less-cheech-and-chong-more-berkshire-hathaway

3/1/2015

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The 'Green Rush' hits D.C. as pot advocates, entrepreneurs flock to marijuana business expo

bizjournals.com/washington/blog/2015/02/the-green-rush-hits-d-c-as-pot-advocates.html

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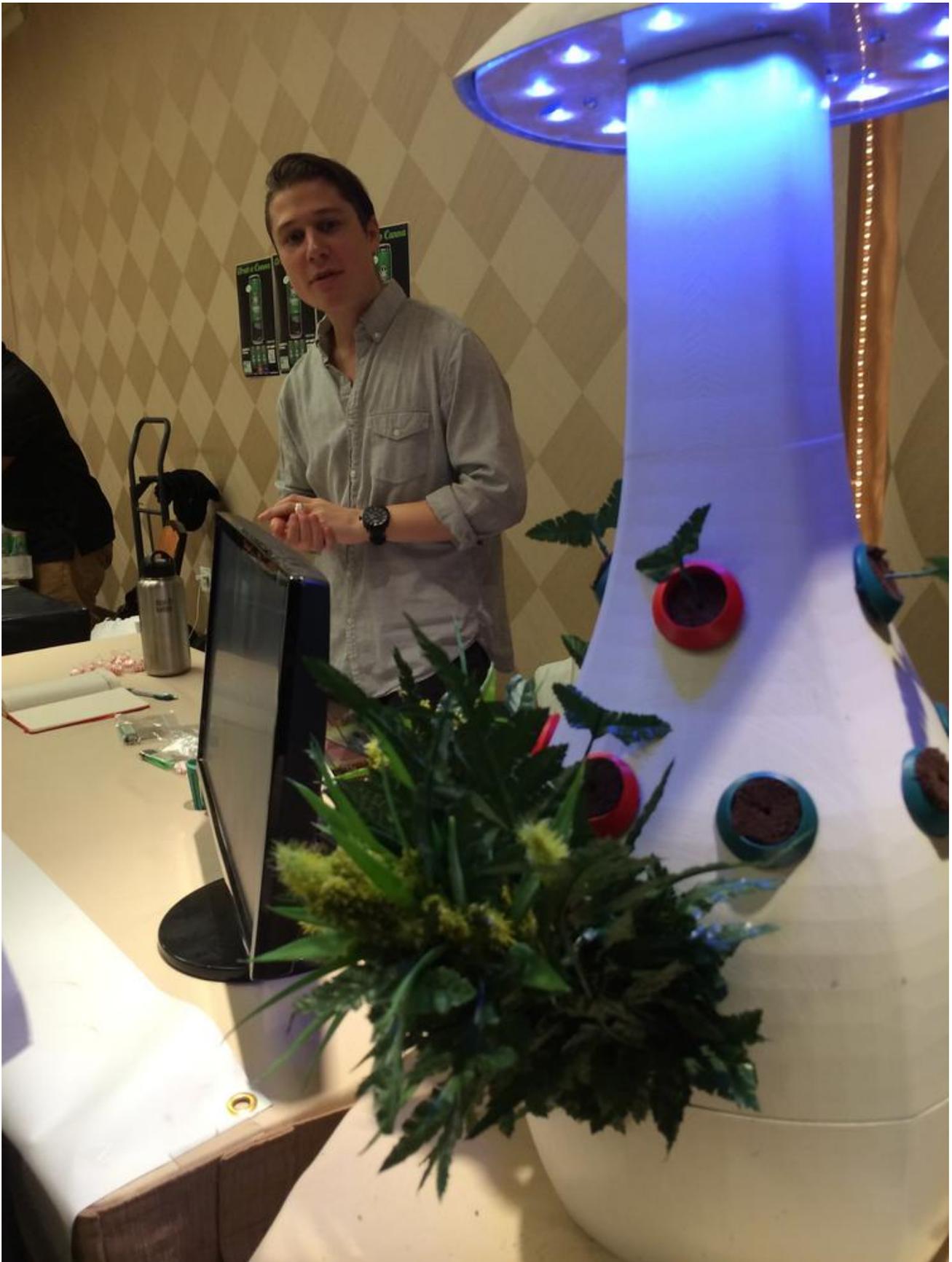
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Tina Reed Staff Reporter *Washington Business Journal*

[Jeffrey Mendez](#) held out some cash and pointed to a flavored energy drink made with hemp.

"I'll take a mango," he told a man who was also selling artisan chocolates and coffee Saturday at [ComfyTree's Cannabis Academy, Expo and Career Fair](#). Mendez, a 32-year-old software developer, took a sip and nodded approvingly before moving to the next table.





[Enlarge](#)

Eric De Feo of Philadelphia-based Ohneka Farms his company's product at the ComfyTree... [more](#)

Tina Reed | Staff

Mendez doesn't have a business idea yet. But wandering through the conference at the Holiday Inn near the L'enfant Plaza Metro, the D.C. native wanted to figure out a way he could make some money off the legalization of marijuana in the District. [Possession and use of small amounts of marijuana by adults in the District](#) became legal as of 12:01 a.m. Thursday.

"I'm just here to be a sponge. I want to learn about as much as I can about the 'Green Rush,'" Mendez said.

Stereotypes collided at the [ComfyTree](#) conference. Men in the entrepreneur's uniform of pressed button down shirts, fitted jeans and cups of Starbucks weaved past men wearing baseball caps, oversized sweatshirts and sagging pants. Women in polyester business attire sat next to women wearing natural fiber clothing.

There were companies specializing in horticulture and companies specializing in investments. Some tables had smoking accoutrements. Others were staffed by consultants. One business handed out swag of a lighter featuring his company's name and baggies of oregano, meant to look like marijuana.

All ultimately had the same desire as Mendez: To figure out a way to make some money.

Marijuana is fueling fast-growing market opportunity elsewhere. Colorado's marijuana industry generated \$66.2 million in medical and retail sales last year, resulting in \$7.74 million in tax revenue. The U.S. market for legal cannabis grew 74 percent in 2014 to \$2.7 billion, according to a study from [Cannabis Business](#), an Oakland, California-based cannabis industry investment and research firm.

National and [local news outlets](#) descended, seeing the perfect chance to localize a national debate. Local proponents, including Councilman [David Grosso](#), I-At Large, took the opportunity to make a few cracks about Congress and explain why marijuana legalization is really about D.C. statehood rights.

Legally stoned: DC pot law goes into effect

DT delmarvanow.com/story/news/local/2015/02/28/dc-pot-law/24190269/

2/28/2015

After much dispute between Congress and the D.C. Council on whether possession of marijuana in Washington, D.C., is legal, the law went into effect at 12:01 a.m. Thursday.

(Photo: Drug Policy Alliance image)

Story Highlights

- The initiative makes it legal for anyone over 21 in D.C. to possess up to 2 ounces of marijuana.
- It must be consumed on private property and cannot be sold, but rather must be traded or shared.
- The law went into effect at 12:01 a.m. Thursday with Mayor Muriel Bowser's blessing.
- Rep. Andy Harris is one of the members of the oversight committee firmly against the measure.



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On Thursday at midnight, for the first time in his life, Allen St. Pierre got legally stoned.

While St. Pierre, executive director of NORML, a national advocacy group for the legalization of marijuana, said he possessed illegal marijuana for his entire adult life, he celebrated when Initiative 71, Washington, D.C.'s ballot measure to legalize marijuana went into effect by not only lighting up, but also by planting his own cannabis seeds.

"In D.C., it was clear this initiative was going to pass," St. Pierre said, referring to last November's referendum when marijuana legalization was approved with 70 percent of the vote. "We did volunteer call outs in the two weeks leading up to the vote, but there was no cajoling necessary to get it to pass."

Initiative 71 makes it legal for anyone over 21 in Washington, D.C., to possess up to 2 ounces of marijuana and to grow up to six marijuana plants in their homes. The marijuana must be consumed on private property and cannot be sold, but rather must be traded or shared.

After much dispute between Congress and the D.C. Council on whether possession of marijuana in Washington, D.C., is legal (and whether the federal or local government has power to determine that), the law went into effect at 12:01 a.m. Thursday with Mayor Muriel Bowser's blessing.

Despite legalization of marijuana possession in the District, the D.C. Council is still working on rules and regulations for the marijuana industry. However, this will take time, in part because the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, which oversees the D.C. government, opposes the law and attempted to use the federal spending bill passed in December to block it.

"The interplay between D.C. laws and Congress is for the most part preventing them from taking any action on that sort of legislation," Robert Capecchi, deputy director of state policies for the Marijuana Policy Project, said.

Rep. Andy Harris, R-Cockeysville, is one of the members of the oversight committee firmly against the measure.

"Congress took clear action to stop enactment of legalization of marijuana in D.C.," Harris said. "I agree with my colleagues at the oversight committee that any movement to legalize marijuana in D.C. is a willful violation of the law."

St. Pierre said the committee's opposition was bizarre.

"It is a script for a comedy series or at least a comedy plot on Saturday Night Live," he said. "How dare (Congress) lash out at these elected officials who turned to 70 percent of their voters."

Both St. Pierre and Capecchi praised Bowser and the D.C. Council for continuing with implementation of Initiative 71 despite Congress's qualms.

"I think they've been wonderfully courageous," Capecchi said. "I think they saw through the bologna and stood up for their constituents."

Despite attempts to block D.C. from allowing marijuana sales, advocates and businesses are already planning for the days when selling and buying pot is legal in the District.

ComfyTree, a cannabis education and entrepreneurship group, will host a Cannabis Expo and Job Fair Saturday and Sunday at the Holiday Inn Capitol to teach locals about growing marijuana and to help them find jobs in the industry.

"We want to give useful information to people, but to not make them pay an arm and a leg for it," Tiffany Bowden, ComfyTree co-founder and chief happiness officer said.

And while ComfyTree will work to educate locals, the Drug Policy Alliance is working to advocate for marijuana taxation that is grounded in racial justice, Dr. Malik Burnett, a policy manager at the group said.

Burnett said the alliance wants legislation to include people with criminal records in the new marijuana marketplace. The group is also advocating for revenues generated by marijuana taxation to go to the Office of Returning Citizens and to after school programs in wards 7 and 8.

"Revenues generated from the sale of marijuana should be used to restore the harms caused to communities of color by the war on drugs," Malik said. "We want money to go toward helping formerly incarcerated individuals returning to the community."

Instead of celebrating legalization by lighting up like St. Pierre, Burnett spent early Thursday morning riding around D.C. with the Metropolitan Police Department to see how the legislation was being implemented.

After a quiet day, the department made two arrests late Thursday afternoon for possession with intent to distribute marijuana, Lt. Sean Conboy of the Metropolitan Police Department Public Information Office said at 7:50 p.m.

"The point that I made to the officers is that the sky hasn't fallen," Burnett said. "(Their) lives are largely the same as they were. They laughed and were largely in agreement."

Marijuana legalization off to messy start in Washington

 [cbc.ca/news/world/marijuana-legalization-off-to-messy-start-in-washington-1.2969344](https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/marijuana-legalization-off-to-messy-start-in-washington-1.2969344)

At 12:01 a.m., the U.S. capital became the latest jurisdiction to allow its residents to possess small amounts of marijuana, but a battle with Congress has set up a perplexing pot dilemma: people will be allowed to smoke it, but where can they buy it?

Washington, D.C., residents voted in November in favour of Initiative 71, to allow those 21 and over to possess up to two ounces of marijuana for personal use and to grow up to six plants (three maturing at a time) in one's home. It also allows someone to give — but not sell — up to one ounce to someone else.

Legalization advocates jumped for joy when the measure passed, but the celebration was short-lived. Congress stepped in to block it. D.C. isn't a state and lawmakers on Capitol Hill have the power to reject whatever city council passes. That's what they did with marijuana legalization.

Congress passed a budget bill in December that contained a line in it forbidding D.C. from using any funds to enact laws or regulations that legalize the possession, use or distribution of marijuana.

Marijuana and civil liberties advocates were outraged that Congress would interfere with the democratic process and deny something that a clear majority of voters supported. But legalization opponents on the Hill had no qualms about exercising Congress's authority over D.C.

Under D.C.'s new law, adults can have up to two ounces of marijuana for personal use and grow up to six plants at home. (Jason Redmond/Reuters)

"I respect the people who live here and most everything passes through without a problem, but the idea that this is going to be a haven for pot smoking, I can't support that," Congressman Jason Chaffetz said on CNN earlier this month.

Chaffetz chairs the House oversight committee which deals with matters related to D.C.

When D.C.'s council passes a law it goes to Congress for a 30-day review period. Unless Congress passes a joint disapproval motion, the law goes ahead. The review period of Initiative 71 is up on Wednesday. Chaffetz has said there are no plans to pass a disapproval motion, because in his mind, Congress has already prevented the law from being implemented through the budget bill.



Congress could take legal action

Members of city council don't see it that way. They believe Initiative 71 was already enacted before that budget bill was passed. They are good to go when it comes to the new possession law, in their opinion. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser spoke on Tuesday about the law coming into effect and emphasized that it still remains illegal to use marijuana in public. "Home use. Home grown," is the tag line she and the police chief are using in their public awareness campaign.

The standoff between city council and Congress could lead to a faceoff in court if Congress decides to take legal action against the city. Chaffetz sent a letter to Bowser Tuesday warning that if council goes ahead with legalization on Thursday, it will be doing so "in knowing and wilful violation of the law."

He has requested documents and other details from the city related to the implementation of Initiative 71 by March 10.

Stakeholders in D.C. are watching closely. "I don't know what might happen, it's kind of up in the air," said Robert Capecchi, of the Marijuana Policy Project.

What does appear certain, however, is that D.C. will not be following in the footsteps of Washington state and Colorado in setting up a legal market for the sale of marijuana. City officials intended on doing that but the budget bill does indicate funds can't be spent to develop regulations.

The effort is stalled, which means there will be no dispensaries, marijuana bakeries or other storefront businesses for recreational pot opening any time soon. (Medical marijuana is already legal.)

Pre-rolled marijuana joints are pictured at the Sea of Green Farms in Washington state last year. The city of Washington, in D.C., will not be allowed to set up a similar retail market the way Washington state did, because of Congress. (Jason Redmond /Reuters)



People will be able to legally use marijuana — barring any successful action by Congress — but they may have trouble getting it if they don't grow it themselves.

The illegal market "is operating and will continue to operate unless and until we are able to put in place a legal market for people to buy it from," Capecchi said.

"People need to educate themselves," he said, and behave "responsibility and appropriately" in terms of what is legal and what is not.

Cannabis expo this weekend

Budding entrepreneurs who want to get into the marijuana business in Washington are still gearing up, however, for the day when sales might be legal.

This weekend in the capital there is a cannabis expo, job fair and "cannabis academy" organized by a company called ComfyTree. Attendees can meet representatives of existing marijuana-related companies, learn how to get into the business themselves, and learn how to grow pot.

Tiffany Bowden, the company's co-founder, said policy experts will be there to explain D.C.'s potentially confusing marijuana landscape. In the absence of a legal market, it's also a good opportunity for people to learn how to grow marijuana at home since that will be a primary way of obtaining it. She also suspects there will be more social club models popping up in D.C. as a result of how legalization is playing out in the capital.

"Entrepreneurs are extremely creative individuals," she said, adding that the barriers erected by Congress will not stop them. "All that means is that there isn't going to be the traditional dispensary model or cultivation model."

Bowden is hopeful that Congress will stop getting in the way of what D.C. residents voted for in November.

"I think they will be making a huge mistake if they find some way to silence voters right there in the nation's capital," she said. "I think it would send a poor signal to citizens not just about marijuana, but that their vote does not matter. I don't think that they want that."

Cannabis conference draws a packed house in DC

[wusa9.com/news/local/dc/cannabis-conference-draws-a-packed-house-in-dc/203534524](https://www.wusa9.com/news/local/dc/cannabis-conference-draws-a-packed-house-in-dc/203534524)

(Photo: WUSA9)

WASHINGTON (WUSA9) -- Whether you want to grow some green or make some green, a cannabis conference this weekend is giving future DC growers and entrepreneurs a crash course in how to do it.

The convention covers what's legally allowed under Initiative 71. The discussion panels and demo booths here are also talking about the industry behind home grow.



"I have a little saying. During the gold rush, the guy who made the most money was the guy who provide the tools to dig for gold. Not necessarily the guy who was out digging, prospecting for gold. And so I think by providing the tools and enabling, and giving them the education they need to be able to build their own businesses. I think that's like they key here," said one woman.

They're also looking to the future market and everything that goes into a marijuana market that allows the sale and taxation of the drug.

"It's across the cultivators, the sellers, the bio-tech companies, the software companies that track the distribution of the product from the grower to the seller. So this industry is not homogeneous," a man at the conference stated.

Many potential entrepreneurs attended the convention to find out how to make their mark.

"So me being here, and I'm just a cook actually, I'm at the bottom of the barrel, but I'm just trying to get a head start. Because all you need is really money and a nice team," an area chef said.

But for that potential to be realized, with sale and taxation becoming legal, D.C. At-Large Councilmember David Grosso says that could be another year or so. That's only if things go well.

"My hope is that Congress will resoundly reject those three members who think they can intrude in our business and tell them to butt out and let us do what we need to do. They've never seemed to worry about how we regulated alcohol in the District so I'm not sure why they're all of a sudden worried about marijuana and I think the whole country's shifting so they're going to be left behind," Grosso stated.

Legalization prompts potential entrepreneurs to learn about the business of marijuana

wtop.com /dc/2015/02/legalization-prompts-potential-entrepreneurs-to-learn-about-the-business-of-marijuana/slide/1/

2/28/2015



By [Dick Uliano](#) February 28, 2015 4:58 pm

D.C.'s new law legalizes possession of up to 2 ounces of marijuana, and also allows people to grow their own.

WASHINGTON — Now that marijuana is legal in the nation's capital, prospective pot entrepreneurs gathered in a daylong conference Saturday to learn about the business of pot.

"We teach people how to grow, we teach regular citizens and potential dispensary owners and current dispensary owners on how to grow their own cannabis," says David DeGraff, CEO of the Denver-based "[Grow School](#)."

Business-minded people swarmed exhibitors' tables like that of the Grow School and Montgomery Hydroponics.

"We have everything you would need for indoor gardening, HPS, high pressure sodium, hydroponic soil, whatever you wish," says Daniel Sims, the owner of the Montgomery County based firm, Montgomery Hydroponics.

Some of Sims' LED grow lights sell for \$349 each.

"LEDs are the wave of the future, no heat, no bulb costs," Sims says.

D.C.'s new law legalizes possession of up to 2 ounces of marijuana, and also allows people to grow their own. Once the weed is successfully cultivated, Alan Amsterdam has the latest technology for smoking it.

"I'm selling bong, vaporizers, grinders, anything that you would need to smoke cannabis," Amsterdam says. It's quite a change of affairs for Amsterdam, whose former business, Capitol Hemp, was forced to close in the city in September 2012.

"Freedom has finally come our way," he says.

Possession of marijuana remains against federal law and a violation could earn a person a year in prison. Strangely, in the city that has just legalized it, the marijuana convention was conducted in the same building that houses the headquarters of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Two of the agency's security guards looked on quizzically as potential marijuana business executives filed by.

But in the exhibit space, there was no sweet aroma of marijuana plants, no smoke wafting in the air and no one looked buzzed. Instead, most people attending the "[ComfyTree Cannabis Academy, Grow School and Job Fair](#)" seemed to share the like-minded goal of making money from legalized pot in D.C.

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DC Cashes In on the New Weed Industry

 [vice.com/en_us/article/washington-dc-is-already-trying-to-cash-in-on-the-legal-marijuana-industry-303](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/washington-dc-is-already-trying-to-cash-in-on-the-legal-marijuana-industry-303)

Just days after [marijuana became legal in the nation's capital](#), cannabis connoisseurs arrived in the city to claim their new territory, flocking to a Holiday Inn on Capitol Hill for the city's first-ever cannabis convention. I was sitting on a bench in the lobby of the hotel, drinking a can of Canna Energy, a hemp oil-infused energy drink, when a tall, slender middle-aged woman with dangly hippie earrings and long hair sat down next to me and started up a conversation.

Dhyani, who gave no last name, told me she had driven from her home in West Virginia to attend the convention. "It's going to be the new gold rush," she said. "Let me ask you, would you have gone out West? I would have saddled up my horse and gone. It wouldn't be easy being a woman in a frontier town, but I would do it."

Dhyani, 52, said she worked for 20 years as an economist at the Department of Labor before retiring, and now she wants to become a financial analyst in the marijuana industry. She was just one of many entrepreneurs, weed enthusiasts and potential investors who flocked to the expo in the hopes of cashing in on the "green rush" that has boomed as the legalization movement gains ground across the country.

Down the hall, around 150 people had shelled out at least \$89.99 to attend the sold-out "cannabis academy," a series of lectures on the ins and outs of starting a "canabusiness" hosted by ComfyTree, a company that provides business guidance to those looking to get in on the growing legal marijuana industry.

Attendees had good reason to show up with dollar signs for eyes. The legal market for marijuana ballooned to \$2.7 billion last year, up 74 percent from 2013, [according to ArcView Group](#), an investment and research firm. Colorado, which in 2012 became the first state to fully legalize and regulate recreational marijuana use, [reported](#) last week that the industry has created 9,400 new jobs in the state. Another [recent report](#) predicted the legal weed market could generate \$35 billion a year by 2020 if current legalization trends continue.

Nestled among a cluster of government agency headquarters and just blocks from the Capitol Building, the expo was an unobvious "fuck you" to Republicans in Congress, who have [attempted to block the city's new legalization law](#). While possession is legal in the District as of last week, Republicans in Congress [have barred](#) city officials from regulating and taxing sales of marijuana, preventing the local government from reaping benefits from the [estimated \\$130 million local market](#).

A sleek smoking accessory for the "un-stoner. Photos by author

Tabling outside the expo hall, Davis Clayton Kiyoo was rushing to keep up with demand for his high-end smoking accessories. Kiyoo started his local company Myster a few years ago and described it as a "un-stoner brand." These are accessories for the business-class smoker, Kiyoo implied, the sort of thing a Goldman Sachs employee with a taste for bud would buy. There's the Stashtray, a sleek metal rolling tray with an equally stylish trio of stash jar, grinder, and ashtray magnetically attached. The deluxe version can be folded up and discreetly placed in a bookshelf, right next to *The 48 Laws of Power* and *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. Or there's the FogPen, a vaporizer that at first glance could pass for a Montblanc pen.

Outside the entrance of the expo hall, a man in an orange safety vest handed out pamphlets on responsible use of marijuana, with guidelines to help prevent users from [pulling a Maureen Dowd](#). About 20 feet away, Maggie Volpo was selling a series of educational books for children about marijuana, narrated by a cartoon skunk named Stinky Steve. "Stinky Steve Explains Grandma's Growroom" and "Stinky Steve Explains Daddy's Dabs," for example. "Stinky Steve Explains Why Papa Is In Prison" is coming soon.

Volpo said she was inspired to create the series because she saw so many parents lying to their kids about

smoking. "You know, closing the bathroom door and stuff," she said. "Stinky Steve will help show that we're self-policing and responsible parents."

"Stinky Steve," a child's guide to "casual cannabis."

Inside the expo hall, some old stoner stereotypes persisted. Although smoking was not allowed, an unmistakable dankness saturated the room, amid the obligatory tables of goofy glassware. But among the packs of curious Virginians who drove up ("I was just hoping there would be free weed") and painfully obvious dudes canvassing the room for a hookup ("You guys have any tree?"), were couples with infants in BabyBjorn carriers and investors in suits.

A sign at one booth advertised job opportunities in "accounting, administration, budtenders, chefs, consulting, delivery, education, entertainment, extraction, growing, inspectors, investing, laboratory, management, marketing, sales, security and trimming." There are [currently hundreds](#) of publicly listed marijuana-related companies, although most of them are penny stocks and not one is listed on a major exchange. Monitoring all this activity are analysts like Michael Swartz, who stood dressed in a sharp suit behind a booth for Viridian Capital & Research, a boutique banking and financial advisory firm. Viridian tracks 75 of the weed-related penny stocks and said its index gained 38 percent last year, despite major shakeups in the last quarter.

Viridian's 2015 outlook is bullish. Swartz said that institutional investors have begun dipping their toes in the marijuana industry, and that he expects more will get on board in 2015, along with increased merger and acquisition activity. Still, there are some uncertainties for the industry, and the firm predicts several publicly listed companies will delist in 2015. Understandably, given the newness of the market, there is a lack of seasoned management among legal marijuana firms, and core business practices have yet to be established.

Kayla Brown, right, and Whitney Morgan, want to be on the ground floor if and when Texas loosens its drugs laws.

On the whole, though, the industry is poised for massive expansion. Where pot isn't legal yet, activists are laying the groundwork for what they see as an inevitable relaxation of drug policy. Whitney Morgan and Kayla Brown, two second-year law students at Texas A&M University manning the booth for the Texas Cannabis Industry Association, have taken that approach—cannabis isn't legal in Texas yet, but being prepared couldn't hurt.

Brown and Morgan said the organization launched in November and now has 18 members. The duo put together a law seminar on marijuana at Texas A&M, the first of its kind in the state, ever. While legalization isn't on the horizon for Texas in the near future, Morgan called the state "the sleeping giant."

"We want to have a foundation where everyone who wants to have a cannabusiness can come to us," Brown added.

As the day's events wound down, I stopped to chat with Tia Gilbert, 22, a member of the ComfyTree staff responsible for social media work. If local activists are laying the foundation one brick at a time, ComfyTree is like an airlift operation, dropping in experts, guidance and resources. The company is hosting another convention in Dallas in March. Gilbert said she found the position on a marijuana jobs website, and has spent the last year travelling around the country for the company. She said she wants to pursue a career in digital marketing for cannabusinesses, and when she gets on a roll, she sounds more *Glengarry Glen Ross* than *Pineapple Express*.

"There's no stopping [legalization]," she told me. "You're either going to make a million dollars off it, or you're going to sit on your couch eating Cheetos and wondering if you could have."

VICE

Vendors Display Marijuana Products at Washington Expo

voanews.com/a/vendors-showcase-marijuana-products-washington-expo/2666893.html

You wouldn't expect a marijuana expo in the U.S. capital, since it's still against federal law to possess the drug. And since it is still illegal to sell pot in the city, there was no marijuana at the trade show held this past weekend — at least none in sight — but there were small, startup businesses with products designed to grow the weed or consume it.

"I love marijuana so it's best to find out what everyone is starting to do for it," expo attendee Keith Carey said.

Visitors at the sold-out trade show ranged in age from their 20s to 70s. Many came because they were curious, now that Washington has legalized possessing small amounts of marijuana for personal use.

"I was just interested in what comes with this new legislation that passed, sort of, 'What are the things we can start looking into to take advantage of the new freedom we have?'" visitor David Jackson said.

On display were lighting systems and planters. Eric de Feo, co-founder of Roots Planter, said his seedling planter was designed for indoor vegetable gardens.

"We really didn't start getting traction with this product until it was suggested you can use this for cannabis," he said.

Visitor Rosina Memolo said she might have found the system that works for her. "I plan to plant my lettuce, my tomatoes, my cucumbers, if the bugs don't get them, and marijuana," she said.

In Washington, it's now legal to cultivate up to six marijuana plants at home. David DeGraff, owner of the Grow School in Colorado, said anyone can learn how to cultivate the weed through his online classes — "how to set up their grow room properly, how to water and fertilize, how to solve problems in the grow room that might occur."

Users who want to know more about the many strains of marijuana can turn to free apps from the online service Leafly. Co-founder Cy Scott said the most popular variety is called Blue Dream.

"It's a pretty readily available strain, and it's also one that doesn't put you to sleep like so many do, so people really like it," he said.

How can you know if your marijuana is safe to consume? Terron Gray of Uplifted Healing Services has a mobile machine for that purpose, and for a fee, he'll check your pot for potency, pesticides and fungicides.

"And I'll take my machine to whatever residence or wherever you want to be to test your cannabis," he said.

Chris Wrights' Maryland-based company, Scentless, found a new air-purification market for marijuana.

"We've designed filters for the indoor gardens and tents that will remove 100 percent of the odors so you can grow it discreetly," Wrights said.

And those looking for drug paraphernalia could find plenty at the expo.

After seeing all the products, visitor Katie Eye said she was considering a career change. "There are plenty of businesses ... a lot of marketing opportunities, sales for the future," she said.

She's not alone. Like others, she believes she can make a pot of money with legal pot.

Tiffany Bowden: Creating A Cannabis Industry For Everyone

cashinbis.com/tiffany-bowden-creating-a-cannabis-industry-for-everyone/

8/21/2015

Tiffany Bowden – Chief Happiness Officer at [ComfyTree](#)

Tiffany Bowden might be the exact opposite of someone you would expect to see in the cannabis industry. A PhD candidate at the University of Illinois, she is also the Chief Happiness Officer at ComfyTree, a business that specializes in educating future or current cannabis industry professionals. Despite not being a cannabis user, Tiffany became tired of seeing the industry marginalized by mainstream media, who clearly were not representing the true value of the cannabis community. She set out to inspire change, using her skill set to help illuminate truths in the industry like; cannabis is medicine for many people, is recreationally safer than alcohol, and that entrepreneurs should all have an equal chance to participate in the significant amount of opportunity in the industry. Tiffany felt shut out of the industry and [ComfyTree](#) was created to help, not only herself, but all those who hoped to enter the cannabis space. Thankfully, she didn't shut us out either as she recently spent some time to talk about her journey into the cannabis industry.

What was the deciding factor for you to join this particular industry?

One of the biggest reasons I joined the industry stems from when I saw, first hand, the medical impact cannabis could have on someone suffering a debilitating disease. I watched my father go from medicating with very harsh and [addictive prescription painkillers](#), prescribed by his doctors, to using medical cannabis. I was amazed at how it could allow him to manage his symptoms and still maintain a [functional](#) life. He wasn't walking around like a [zombie](#), much in the way you see patients react when they are doped up on pharmaceuticals. Eventually he lost his ability to obtain cannabis when his friend passed away and he was forced to return to the debilitating prescription drug cycle. When my father passed away I took it upon myself to use my background within communications, media, advertising, to be able to shed some light on what's really going on in this industry.

As for myself, I don't have any background as a cannabis consumer, medically or recreationally. I think that is one of the largest misconceptions that people outside the industry have; that in order to advocate for the industry or the cause, you yourself must therefore be a recreational user. Outsiders who are uneducated as to the cannabis industry still think those who do business in the cannabis space are 'just a bunch of potheads trying to get access to marijuana'. I am one obvious example of how that stereotype is no longer the case. I'm a PhD candidate at the [University of Illinois](#). I could have pursued countless other business opportunities but I chose to dedicate myself to this industry because I believe very much in it.

Outsiders who are uneducated as to the cannabis industry still think those who do business in the cannabis space are 'just a bunch of potheads trying to get access to marijuana'. I am one obvious example of how that stereotype is no longer the case.

What were you doing before Comfy Tree?

Before [ComfyTree](#) I was working with an advertising agency as well as a marketing firm. They were companies much like [Procter & Gamble](#) or [Barefoot Proximity](#). Fast forward to now and I'm currently a PhD candidate at the University of [Illinois](#), focusing on communication research. Although I spend most of my time looking at the cannabis industry, I also specialize in consumer insights, media representation, as well as intersections between marketing and advertising.

Tell me about the point in the time you realized the coming of the 'green rush'?

I actually discovered the green rush when I was in [Illinois](#) for my PhD program. The laws in Illinois certainly weren't helping people who wanted to enter the cannabis industry, so we focused our energy on opening our own dispensary and doing what we could to help others. We adopted a 'Let's help ourselves by helping others' mentality. For us, the best way to do that was through access to education. So we decided to start putting together affordable, educational seminars. Instead of charging a small group an egregious amount of money to talk to one expert, we reached out to multiple experts that we could put in front of people for a fraction of the cost.

It doesn't matter to me if you are a student, minority, female or a member of the middle class, I want to create an industry that works for everyone.

The moment we knew that [ComfyTree](#) was something special was on the night of our first event. We had over 115 people in attendance, including a US [Senator](#), reporters and we even made the news that night. We looked at each other, looked at the event, the media coverage, and thought 'Wow. We're actually on to something here'. There are so many people out there that want to get into this industry. The fact that we are able to help them, however we can, is something incredible to me.

Right now, where are you guiding your passion and energy?

I am very passionate when it comes to helping people gain access to cannabis, especially those people who otherwise would not be able to. It doesn't matter to me if you are a student, minority, female or a member of the middle class, I want to create an industry that works for everyone. That's what ComfyTree is all about. In addition, I recently contributed to the creation of the [Minority Cannabis Business Association](#). We're constantly coming up with new and innovative ways to create more inclusion in the industry.

In fact, we recently staffed a sign language interpreter for one of our latest events in [Washington DC](#). The interpreter was so well received that, since the event, we have seen a ton of interest from the deaf community. They want to start attending our events, especially now that we have provided them with a vessel to make that experience possible. Additionally, the spanish speaking community has reached out to us as well, asking for an interpreter at future events. Whether it's working to include interpreters or bringing in students who otherwise couldn't afford an event like this, for us to be able to provide support for this community is something we take great pride in.

ComfyTree, in a sense, is built on two parts. One part advocacy and one part business. We help ourselves by helping others. My passion goes towards that and it continues to fuel our energy.

Describe your work ethic to me in one word.

Relentless

Who is a person that you consider as a role model? Maybe someone who has been a mentor to you? Why and how did this person impact your life?

My father.

My father had a big impact on me because he was a fighter. For decades, he suffered from [kidney failure](#) but he just kept on fighting. Even through the times where he was very tired and it seemed like there was no end in sight. He fought all the way to the end and tried to keep a very positive spirit, even when it seemed like there was nothing to smile about or be positive about. He is frequently my muse and my point of reference when I feel like, "Why am I doing this? I feel like giving up. Why am I here?" He is frequently the beacon of light that guides my ship.

Tell me about an esteemed achievement of yours.

Launching [ComfyTree](#) is something that I am very proud of because it's something that was built from the desire to help other people. Instead of a competitive, winner take all mentality, ComfyTree was and is more spiritually based on the idea of abundance; the principle that if we help others, others will help us. If we give more, we will get more in return. Even though some people say the cannabis industry is capitalistic and cut throat at times, we have created a space that is built on inclusion and community but it is still profitable. We are striving to create an industry that works for everyone and I am very proud of it.

Join the ranks: Are you a CEO, entrepreneur or someone in the cannabis industry who's making an impact? [We'd like to hear your story!](#)

What's the best advice you've ever gotten?

Follow your heart.

'Follow your heart' is probably the best advice that I've gotten. We all find ourselves in those moments where we feel what your gut is saying versus what your brain is thinking. It goes all the way back to when you were a kid and you're taking a multiple-choice test. You have an inkling of what you're supposed to do and you mark down the right answer but then you go back and you second-guess yourself. Invariably you put the wrong answer the second time around.

| *I find that when I trust my gut and I go with that what feels right, it usually ends up being right.*

I find that when I trust my gut and I go with that what feels right, it usually ends up being right. For me, there is something that's actually connected there. Something that actually communicates with you in terms of the way that you should go. And that's the way that we operate with ComfyTree is that we don't always have the right answers. We don't always know the best thing to do. But we just trust our gut and go with it. I think that the people who interact with us can sense that.

We treat everybody as human beings. Everybody is important whether you're a customer who came to our free [CannaBazaar](#), somebody who has paid for the all-inclusive package or a sponsor that is headlining the whole thing. You're going to get an experience with someone who values you as a human being, because we feel that that's the right thing to do.

What is the most important thing for us to know *now* about the legal marijuana industry?

I think we need to shift our collective focus in terms of how we are going about the process of legalization. A lot of the reporters kind of keep asking redundant questions like, 'Do people think that marijuana should be legal or not, yes and no'. Inevitably and routinely people will always say yes, we should legalize it. It may be by a wide margin or a narrow one, but the stats are remaining steady and the answer is always a resounding yes. Well then the kind of question remains, well why hasn't it happened yet?

| *We need to shift our collective focus in terms of how we are going about the process of legalization.*

I believe that legalization hasn't happened yet because we are asking the wrong question. We're thinking on the wrong level. The question isn't 'should we legalize?' but 'how do we legalize?'. How should we go about the process? When you ask that question, it gets a little more complicated because people are a bit fragmented on the execution. Should we do CBD only legislation? Should we do 18 and older adult use? How about 21 and older adult

use or medical marijuana only? That's where stuff starts to get sticky and the devil is in the details in that sense.

I would say to people that legalization is coming. It's just a question of what kind of legalization is coming and when. Those are the things that we need to be paying more attention to. People need to take the time to understand the different kinds of measures that are on the table. Just because a bill says 'medical marijuana bill' or 'legalization bill' doesn't mean that all bills are created equally. Some of them are not necessarily created with the consumer's best interest in mind. People need to take the time to dissect these bills so they can be fully aware of exactly what they are voting for. The last thing this movement needs is to hurriedly pass legislation because of the excitement and novelty of the industry.

If we are sitting across from each other a year from now, how will our conversation about the 'green rush' be going?

The conversation about the green rush will be going like;

"Hey, look I told you. Look at all of these people who have been able to get involved in the industry. I'm glad that we and other organizations were able to get in front of the legalization curve to where we can create some diversity in the industry. We've got women, minorities and small businesses all intersecting at the same level with your blue chip cannabis companies like Dixie Elixirs and Harborside. It is that amazing."

By bringing attention to these issues and supporting growth in the industry, we are working to create a more positive trajectory for the cannabis community as a whole.

That is the conversation that I would like to be having. By bringing attention to these issues and supporting growth in the industry, we are working to create a more positive trajectory for the cannabis community as a whole. People are waking up to the industry, educating themselves and discovering that they want to be apart of everything. For those reasons, they are going to start paying attention to all the different legislation that is going to make that possible.

What do you think about ComfyTree's concept? How do you see the industry shifting over the next year? Join the conversation and comment below!

Are you a cannabis entrepreneur?

Cashinbis recognizes and highlights entrepreneurs in the legal cannabis and hemp industries. Contact us to be considered for inclusion in the upcoming cannabis entrepreneur publication.

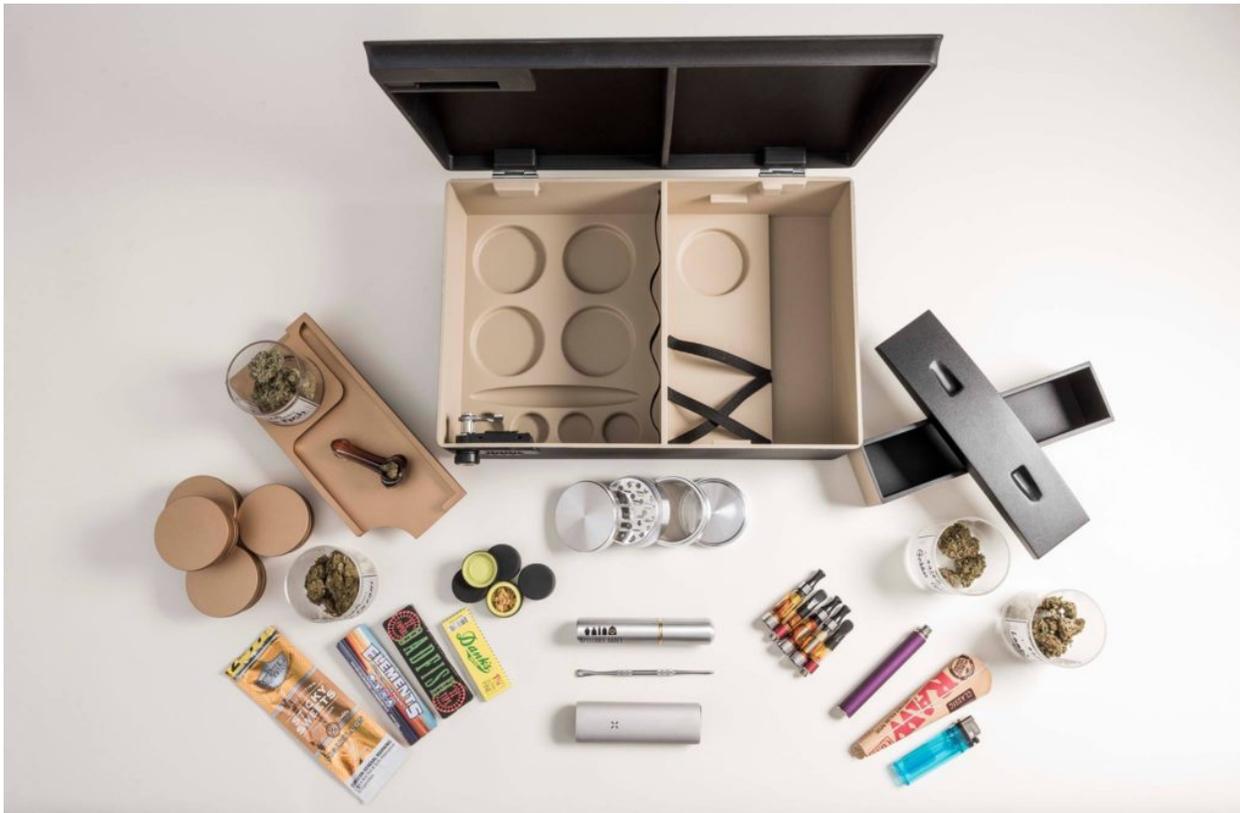
17 Black-Owned Cannabis Businesses You Should Know

 officialblackwallstreet.com/black-owned-cannabis-marijuana-business-support/



As the number of states legalizing marijuana steadily increases, African Americans are slowly but surely carving out their own space within the billion dollar industry. Since Blacks have been [disproportionately criminalized](#) for marijuana possession for decades, it's refreshing to see more take hold of the industry and claim it. These Black entrepreneurs are at the forefront of that movement.

[Apothecary Brands](#)



Apothecary provides discreet, high end luxury accessories to elevate your cannabis experience.

Location: Online

Owner: Whitney Beatty

ART420



ART420 is a Cannabis Inspired Art Show celebrating the artistic expression of the Cannabis Culture.

Owner: Erik Range

Budding Solutions



Budding Solutions is a boutique cannabis consulting firm based in Baltimore, MD providing consulting and management services to startups and established organizations in the Cannabis Industry.

Owner: Shanita Penny

The Canna MDs



The Canna MDs is a family-owned business specializing in the use of Cannabis Therapeutics for their patients. They've counseled several thousands of patients in using cannabis therapies to promote and restore health, wellbeing, and function.

Owners: Dr. Rachel Knox & Dr. Jessica Knox

Comfy Tree



ComfyTree

A Comfy Way to Cannabis Education & Entrepreneurship

ComfyTree provides cannabis training, consulting, and resources on how to enter and operate within the cannabis industry.

Owners: Tiffany Bowden & Tarik Nally

District Growers



District Growers is a close-knit, local business providing the highest quality cannabis products on the market. The company is also a registered medical cannabis cultivator..

Owner: Corey Barnette

Location: Washington D.C.

RELATED: [Meet the First Black Woman to Own a Marijuana Dispensary in Colorado](#)

EstroHaze



EstroHaze is a multi-media platform that provides cannabis business, lifestyle, and career resources tailored to women of color.

Owners: Safon Floyd, Kali Wilder and Sirita Wright

Location: Online

[The Hollingsworth Cannabis Company](#)



The Hollingsworth Cannabis Co is a family owned and operated Tier III producer and processor. At their Seattle company you can find quality cannabis hand-packed to order.

Location: Seattle, WA

Owner: Raft Hollingsworth

[Marijuana Investment & Private Retreat](#)



(Photo: Marc Piscotty / for NBC News)

MIPR Holdings is a cannabis-related consulting services company focusing on the development and growth of businesses seeking to tap into the marijuana space. Their overall vision is to educate communities most effected by the “War on Drugs” and empower them to get involved in the cannabis industry whether as business owners, or as investors with the intent of creating generational wealth.

Owner: Khadijah and Charles Adams

Location: Aurora, Colorado

[Minority Cannabis Business Association](#)



The Minority Cannabis Business Association (MCBA) is the first non-profit organization created to progress the cannabis industry by increasing diversity.

Board Chairman: Jesce Horton

[Minorities For Medical Marijuana](#)



MINORITIES FOR MEDICAL MARIJUANA

One Community | One Voice | Your Vote

Minorities for Medical Marijuana is an organization providing education, marketing and more to minority communities on cannabis public policy, business, healthcare access, and social impact.

Owner: Roz McCarthy

Headquarters: Orlando, FL

[Panacea Valley Gardens](#)



Panacea Valley Gardens is a family-owned cultivation facility dedicated to growing clean, consistent, high-quality cannabis in Oregon, from concentrates to edibles.

Location: Portland, OR

Owner: Jesce Horton

Simply Pure



(Photo: George Demopoulos / Business Den)

Simply Pure is the first Black woman-owned dispensary in Denver, CO that offers customers high quality, organically grown and cured cannabis (concentrates, medicinal CBD oils, and edibles from marijuana infused jams and granola bars). Co-owner Wanda James also left us with so many gems during our interview with her. Read that [HERE](#).

Owners: Wanda James & Scott Durrah

Location: Denver, CO

StashTwist



StashTwist is a Black woman-operated, non-profit cannabis collective in the East Bay providing safe access to high-quality medical cannabis and cannabis products. They offer select edibles, oils, loose-leaf herb, tinctures, vape pens, topicals, and everything in between.

Owner: Andrea Unsworth

Supernova Women



(Photo: Roxanne Pasibe)

Supernova Women is an organization that offers networking for women of color interested in entering the cannabis industry.

Co-Owners: Andrea Unsworth, Amber Senter, Sunshine Lencho, Nina Parks

Location: Online

Viola Extracts



Marc Piscotty / for NBC News

Viola is a Denver-based cannabis extraction company dedicated to providing the purest concentrates for an elevated experience.

Owner: Dan Pettigrew

Location: Denver, CO

The Weed Show



The Weed Show is a daily series hosted by Charlo Greene. You may remember her as the Alaskan news anchor who quit while live on air with the now infamous words “Fuck It, I Quit.” share the most useful, interesting and entertaining information about weed that you can use to live your best life.

Owner: Charlo Greene

Location: Online

For more Black-owned businesses, check out our directory of over 2,500 Black-owned businesses [HERE](#).