

## **USA: Oregon takes first steps into era of legal retail marijuana**

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**Williams, Oregon:** Forty-two years after Oregon became the first state to decriminalize small amounts of marijuana, the state is taking its first steps toward allowing state-licensed stores to sell limited amounts of it to anyone over 21.

"Oregon has long been a pioneer on sensible marijuana policies," said Anthony Johnson, chief petitioner on Measure 91, which on Wednesday makes Oregon the fourth state to adopt laws legalizing recreational use of cannabis for people old enough to drink.

Smoking marijuana in public is illegal, but in Portland police are discouraging residents from calling to report smokers.

The Portland chapter of National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws posted on its website that it would have a tent set up for a midnight countdown to the end of marijuana prohibition.

The site offers a big neon sign in the shape of Oregon as a background for selfies of revelers who light up.

Adults will be allowed to possess a small amount and grow four plants, but not to buy or sell it yet. It will be a few months to more than a year before it is legal to sell, and then only with a state permit.

The Legislature is considering a bill to allow medical marijuana dispensaries to start selling small amounts to anyone over 21 on Oct. 1, in order to get over the incongruity of marijuana being legal to have and to grow, but not to buy.

The state-regulated retail system is not expected to be fully up and running until late next year. Growers are expected to be able to start applying for licenses in January, with permits for processors, wholesalers and retailers rolling out in succession.

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