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## Council mixed on pot penalty review

### Cannabis ordinance change draws lukewarm response

By Kaitlyn Scoville  
OSHKOSH HERALD

At least four members of Common Council are open to discussing a plan by member Aaron Wojciechowski to explore city statutes and ordinances regarding the decriminalization of cannabis.

Though approached by some with hesitancy, a majority of the group agreed to revisit the city's jurisdiction in charging for the possession of marijuana.

Winnebago County's current law prohibits a person from possessing or attempting to possess marijuana. People convicted of those offenses cannot be fined more than \$1,000 and not be sentenced to more than six months, or both.

The Common Council proposed in 2018

to reduce the local fine for first-offense cannabis possession from \$325 to \$25 but settled on \$200 plus court costs.

Winnebago County District Attorney Christian Gossett said most charges for simple possession of marijuana are misdemeanors rather than felonies because felony convictions take away voting and firearm rights.

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## INSIDE



**Digging the past**  
Privy excursions seek buried history  
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## Cannabis health, legal status lingers

By Joseph Schulz  
HERALD CONTRIBUTOR

As with any substance, marijuana use – especially at a young age – can have serious physiological, psychological and legal consequences.



NAVIGATING CANNABIS

### Last in a series

Communities coordinator for the Breakwater Drug and Alcohol Coalition.

"You're not thinking about consequences when you try some of these things or

Marijuana use among young people can pose developmental and physiological risks, according to Samantha Hilker, Winnebago County community health strategist and Drug-Free

Communities coordinator for the Breakwater Drug and Alcohol Coalition.

"You're not thinking about consequences when you try some of these things or

SEE **Cannabis** ON PAGE 17



Oshkosh Herald

An air show entertains the crowd at EAA AirVenture 2019, the last time Wittman Airport was able to host the international event.

## AirVenture ready to take flight again

### Pandemic pause leads to special fly-in effort

Oshkosh Herald

With an extra year of planning and expected surge in attendance, AirVenture 2021 organizers are putting the finishing touches on the fly-in that opens Monday and runs through Aug. 1.



Highlighted programs will mark the 75th anniversary of World War II's end, the 30th anniversary of Desert Storm and a salute to U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC)

### Inside

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among other aviation spotlights. Good-year's newest blimp, Wingfoot Three, is also on the way for a visit.

AirVenture visitors from 2019 and earlier will notice changes this year ranging from traffic flow to air shows that EAA organizers had been working on with both improvements and safety in mind. Also notable this year is the free admission for

ages 18 and under through the support of Boeing Co.

To keep air show crowd gatherings somewhat reduced in size, some afternoon shows will have a split performance area with two acts flying at the same time. Along the 11,000-foot flightline will be aerobatic displays that have a smaller performance area that can safely fly their routines at the same time on the north and south ends. Each act will have its own announcer and music on EAA's sound system.

For aircraft that need a larger demo area, such as the F-16 Viper Demo Team and World War II warbirds, the full flightline

SEE **AirVenture** ON PAGE 18



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# Cannabis

FROM PAGE 1

engage in some of this behavior, and that affects you long term," she said.

Especially for those under the age of 25, marijuana use can hamper brain development, especially if used frequently, according to Dr. Eric Smiltneek, an addiction medicine specialist at Aurora Medical Center.

He says regular marijuana use between ages of 12 to 15 can negatively impact the brain's ability to take in and process new information.

While early-age marijuana use doesn't create a major IQ drop, the average impact on IQ is about five points, according to Smiltneek.



Smiltneek

"Five points is kind of a difference between like the average of a high school graduate versus a college graduate," he said. "A lot

of times, I'll counsel some of my younger patients to say, 'If you really want to go to college, then heavy marijuana use may impair that goal or that dream.'"

Beyond brain development, Smiltneek says there is a correlation between heavy marijuana use and people who later develop schizophrenia.

He added that correlation studies are "hard to gauge" because some people may have already been on the verge of becoming schizophrenic and marijuana may not have been the cause.

"But there's some thought that early smoking in adolescence may make it more likely that you can potentially have a sig-

Breakwater, a community coalition focused on youth and adult substance use in Winnebago County, sponsored this series on cannabis, a topic gaining attention as 'cannabis culture' evolves with legalization efforts and its future impact on society. See past stories at [oshkoshherald.com](http://oshkoshherald.com).

nificant psychotic break that could lead to lifelong illnesses with paranoia and disorganization," Smiltneek said.

While not as addictive as alcohol or cigarettes, marijuana does also have addictive properties, he said.

The dopamine hormone in the brain, which causes pleasure, is released through cannabinoid receptors in the brain from smoking marijuana, Smiltneek noted.

"Any receptor in the brain that's linked to dopamine release has been shown to cause results in addictions," he said. "Marijuana is definitely an addictive substance."

However, Smiltneek says it is not as likely to cause lifelong addiction as other drugs such as nicotine, heroin or methamphetamine.

"It's definitely not the most addictive drug that's out there, but there's definitely a brain response," he said. "A lot of people say they don't have physical withdrawal symptoms, but if people are regular marijuana users, there is some physical discomfort that they get when they stop. If you use once every three months, you're probably not feeling that withdrawal."

Aside from the physiological ramifications, marijuana can also come with legal consequences because it remains illegal to possess in Wisconsin.

In Wisconsin, individuals arrested for possession of marijuana may end up with a misdemeanor or, in some cases, a felony

for repeat offenses.

In Winnebago County, District Attorney Christian Gossett said most charges for simple possession of marijuana are misdemeanors rather than felonies because felony convictions take away voting and firearm rights.

"Taking away someone's civil liberties and voting rights seems pretty excessive for something legal in a lot of other states," he said.

Even so, prior drug convictions can stay with a person for years.

"Although you may not end up in the prison system, that's going to stay with you," said Jay Selthofner, founder of the Wisconsin Cannabis Activist Network. "You may have housing discrimination, or you may be denied a job."

In addition, even if someone doesn't feel "stoned," University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Police Capt. Chris Tarmann says

people can still be charged with operating while intoxicated if driving with marijuana in their system.

"The law is written so you just need a detectable amount of a restricted controlled substance inside your blood," he said. "Much like alcohol, it dissipates from your system differently based on your own body composition and what you ingest."

He added that marijuana can remain in someone's blood for several hours even after they no longer feel impaired.

Hilker hopes that people take the time to think about the potential consequences of marijuana use before partaking.

"Potential college scholarships might be jeopardized, potential job opportunities might be jeopardized, you could find yourself with a criminal record, which precludes you from a lot of opportunities in the future, as well as the developmental consequences," Hilker said.

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# THINK ABOUT IT

Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the main active ingredient in marijuana, is fat soluble. This means it is stored in the body's fatty tissues and remains detectable in urine for as long as one month after use (source: American Addiction Centers)

# TALK ABOUT IT

On vacation you smoked marijuana or consumed an edible or other THC product while in a 'legal' state. You land your dream job when you return, but you are required to do a urine drug-screen. How could the decisions made on your vacation impact real life for you?



For more information or for references to facts on marijuana visit [www.breakwaterwi.org/resources/](http://www.breakwaterwi.org/resources/)

