

Beshear marks cannabis program milestone

By Casey Roberts
Advocate Messenger

Gov. Andy Beshear traveled across the commonwealth last week to mark the openings of three new Tier 1 medical cannabis cultivators, including one in Nicholasville and another in Stanford, as the state's young medical marijuana program continues to take root.

In Jessamine County on Monday, April 20, Beshear joined company leaders to cut the ribbon at BlüGrass, a Kentucky founded operation that had relocated to Colorado before returning home after the commonwealth legalized medical cannabis. The same day, the governor was in Lincoln County for a ceremony at Best State LLC in Stanford. The following day, Tuesday, April 21, Beshear traveled to Providence in Hopkins County to cut the ribbon at a third Tier 1 cultivator, Slaughter Branch LLC.

In a post on social media, Beshear summed up the week's openings.

"Three ribbon cuttings in one week as we continue to open more medical cannabis facilities for Kentuckians in need," he wrote. "Just a year in, we're delivering results that help our people and boost our economy. It's a win win."

Tier 1 is the smallest of Kentucky's cultivator license categories. Tier 1 growers are capped at



GOV. ANDY BESHEAR'S OFFICIAL SOCIAL MEDIA PAGE

Gov. Andy Beshear (above, right) shakes hands with a worker during a tour of Best State LLC in Stanford on Monday, April 20. The Lincoln County facility is one of three new Tier 1 medical cannabis cultivators that opened in Kentucky last week. Beshear (right, center) joins BlüGrass leadership and staff in cutting the ribbon.

2,500 square feet of canopy. Cultivators are licensed to grow medical cannabis in enclosed, secure facilities and to sell the raw plant material to licensed processors, producers and dispensaries within the state.

Writing about the Nicholasville opening,



Beshear pointed to the company's Kentucky roots.

"Medical cannabis is bringing relief to Kentuckians; it's also bringing in new business and good jobs," he wrote. "Today we cut the ribbon on Blügrass

in Nicholasville, a Kentucky founded company that has returned to its home state thanks to the legalization of medical cannabis."

BlüGrass operates under L+O Legacies and is led by

Kyle Hacker, according to the Kentucky Cannabis Industry Association. The smaller-scale model is designed to give patients more variety on dispensary shelves and is described as "craft cannabis."

Beshear marked the Stanford ceremony in a separate post.

"We made a promise to deliver safe medical cannabis to Kentuckians, and that's a promise we've kept," the governor wrote. "We cut the ribbon on two new cultivators, including Best State LLC in Stanford. We've made a lot of progress in just a year."

The governor has consistently framed access to regulated cannabis as an alternative to opioids for patients with chronic pain and post traumatic stress disorder.

Beshear said roughly nine cultivators were operating in the commonwealth as of last week, and almost 21,000 Kentuckians hold medical cannabis cards.

Under Kentucky law, only registered cardholders may legally purchase medical cannabis. Qualifying conditions currently include cancer, chronic or severe pain, epilepsy and other intractable seizure disorders, multiple sclerosis and related muscle spasms, chronic nausea or cyclical vomiting syndrome, and post traumatic stress disorder, according to the state Office of Medical Cannabis. Beshear has said expanding that list to include conditions such as Crohn's disease, which is recognized in some other states, is a priority going forward.

State tightens open burning rules to protect air quality

FRANKFORT — May 1 will mark the beginning of ozone season in the state, and with it, to protect families and preserve air quality, open burning restrictions will remain in place for more than a half dozen counties through September.

"Protecting families across the commonwealth is always our top priority," said John Lyons, secretary of the Energy and Environment Cabinet. "Everyone can help do their part to protect our air, health and quality of life by observing these important guidelines during ozone season."

Burning of brush, tree limbs, leaves, or natural growth from land clearing is not allowed in Boone, Boyd, Bullitt, Campbell, Kenton, or Oldham counties, nor in parts of Lawrence County during ozone season.

Jefferson County has open burning restrictions all year. These rules are in place because these counties have exceeded the federal air quality standards before and are more likely to have pollution problems in warmer months.

Ozone is protective when it occurs high in the stratosphere, but ground-level ozone is a summertime health risk, created when pollutants chemically react in the atmosphere in the pres-



KENTUCKY TODAY FILE PHOTO

Officials restrict outdoor burning to prevent pollution.

ence of heat and sunlight.

Ground-level ozone irritates breathing passages and can trigger asthma attacks. Asthma affects more than 380,000 Kentuckians.

Open burning contributes to ozone pollution. In recent weeks, wildfires have impacted air quality and spread smoke into neighborhoods, which can be especially harmful to children, older adults, and people with ongoing health problems.

"Recent events have reminded us how quickly our air quality can change and how important it is to work together to protect it," said Michael Kennedy, director of the Division for Air Quality. "By following outdoor burning rules and making

smart choices, we help keep our communities safe and healthy for ourselves and our neighbors. There is no greater investment than the air we all share."

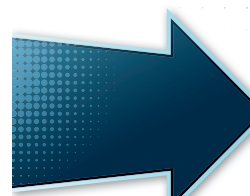
Burning trash is illegal throughout Kentucky, all year long.

State law prohibits burning things like plastics, tires, coated wire, and treated wood because they release dangerous toxins into the air. Breaking these rules can lead to fines or other penalties.

Visit eec.ky.gov/Environmental-Protection/Air/Pages/Open-Burning.aspx for information about what you can and cannot burn, seasonal open burning restrictions, and how to report illegal burning.



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