

COMMUNITY

Local medical cannabis dispensary scheduled to open late September

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A new local medical cannabis dispensary will be opening its doors later next month, pending state approval.

Wildcat Cannabis, LLC, will be located at 2685 801 North, Morehead, located across 801 from Holiday Inn Express and next door to the new Liberty Mart. Operating hours will be from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Wildcat Cannabis is owned by Merida Capital Holdings, of New York, a private equity firm “targeting fundamental growth drivers underpinning the rapid development of the cannabis industry.” Merida Capital Holdings owns dozens of cannabis-focused businesses, including dispensaries in Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Virginia, and West Virginia. The firm was founded by Mitch Baruchowitz and Kevin Gibbs in 2016.

Their website describes their businesses operations as focused “on cultivation technologies, products and services associated with the evolution of cannabis as an agricultural product, a natural plant-based medicine, a constituent in pharmaceutical formulations, and an adult-use consumer product.”

This reporter recently met with co-founder Kevin

Gibbs, along with managers Brad Doyle and Jolinda Case. Case, who has Carter County roots, has managed dispensaries in West Virginia and will be managing the new Rowan County dispensary.

Gibbs emphasized the importance of location in their new location. He noted that the I-64 exit 133 at Hwy. 801 is an important tourism hub for Cave Run Lake, which brings in visitors from surrounding states.

Gibbs said the dispensary will feature a wide variety of legal products for sale to those with the medical marijuana card. The store will feature a sales floor with knowledgeable staff as well as a drive-thru. Products include items such gummies, vapes, and topicals and a variety of clinical products. He noted that all products are tested and regulated.

Medical marijuana has been approved for use in Kentucky for the treatment of cancer, chronic pain, epilepsy and other seizure disorders, multiple sclerosis and other muscle spasm conditions, chronic nausea and vomiting, and post-traumatic stress disorder. The 2026 Kentucky General Assembly approved additional qualifying conditions, including terminal illness, sickle cell anemia, ALS, Parkinson’s disease, HIV, AIDS, Huntington’s disease, muscular dystrophy, cachexia or wast-

ing syndrome, Crohn’s disease, ulcerative colitis, neuropathies, severe arthritis, fibromyalgia and glaucoma.

Earlier this year the Trump administration reclassified medical cannabis from a Schedule I controlled substance to the much less serious Schedule III. Gibbs said he is awaiting further rulings from the Drug Enforcement Administration later this month.

Cannabis is currently legal in 41 states for medical use and 24 states for recreational use.

Following the passage of Senate Bill 47 in 2023, the cultivation, processing, and sale of medical cannabis became legal in Kentucky in 2025. It is administered under the Kentucky Medical Cannabis Program, a part of the Department for Health and Family Services.

The legislation regulates the cultivation, processing, and dispensing of medical cannabis in the state. The new law gave both county and city governments the option to regulate cannabis businesses in their communities, to prohibit those businesses entirely, or to allow voters to decide. In the Kentucky News Group region, Bath County took no action to regulate, while Menifee County voters approved the sale of medical cannabis in a ballot measure.

The Morehead City Council approved the first reading of medical cannabis business license requirements at their January 2025 meeting. The Rowan County Fiscal Court followed suit at its January meeting.

The legislation divided the state into regions for the purpose of a lottery to regulate the number of dispensaries. Region 3 includes Bath, Boyd, Carter, Elliott, Fleming, Greenup, Lewis, Mason, Menifee, Montgomery, Morgan, Nicholas, Robertson, and Rowan Counties

Currently the only other dispensaries in this part of the state are in Ashland and Maysville (Speakeasy Dispensary), Mt. Sterling (Southern Green Wellness), and Stanton (Hye Property Management).

Patients are limited to a 30-day supply, and limits are also established on the amount of the active ingredient TCH: 35 percent on flowers, 70 percent on concentrates, and 10 milligrams in edibles.

Morgan Rivers, co-owner of the Hills Medspa and Longevity Lounge, located at 105 East Main Street, Morehead, said her business has helped around 200 people sign up for medical cannabis cards so since January 2025, and they are now averaging 3 to 4 each day from all over the region and tri-state area. She said all of this took place without any advanced advertis-

ing.

Rivers said The Hills, a beauty and wellness spa, now focuses on cellular health, which is why they have begun certifying people for THC-based therapies. “It has grown dramatically,” she said.

She said co-owner Morgan Stewart does the assessments. Stewart is an emergency room nurse with 13 years of experience, including 6 years of experience as an EMT, and she has over 50 certifications.

Rivers explained that to get signed up for the card, people need to have a valid Kentucky ID and have one of the qualifying medical conditions, with medical records of the condition available. She said what they are looking for is that past treatments have not alleviated the condition. Rivers

also said they need to know the person’s surgical and mental health history. The applicant must also not have any disqualifying criminal offenses.

Once the assessment is completed, they upload their information into the Team Kentucky online Portal, where the person also completes their portion of the application, which is \$25. Rivers said it is a “super simple process.”

The Hills charges \$15 for the certification, while veterans pay only \$75. Medical cannabis cards must be recertified annually, which is \$99.

You can contact The Hills Medspa and Longevity Lounge by phone, 606-462-3370, Message on Facebook, or stop by 105 East Main Street, Morehead, for more information.

Legal Notice

In accordance with Chapter 65A.080, KRS 424.220, of the Kentucky Revised Statutes, the financial report and supporting data may be inspected by the public at the Menifee County Conservation District Office located at 2093 Highway 460 West, Frenchburg, KY 40322, between the hours of 8:30 am and 5:00 pm Tuesday-Thursday. The Menifee County Conservation District holds its regularly scheduled monthly board meetings at 3:30 pm on the second Thursday of each month at their office. All meetings are open to the public.

“This advertisement was paid for by Menifee County Conservation District using taxpayer dollars in the amount of \$40.”

Published in the Bath County News-Outlook 08.12.26

Request for Qualifications
City of Owingsville

Sewer Line Replacement and Inflow & Infiltration Reduction Project

The City of Owingsville will be accepting statements of qualifications for the Owingsville Sewer Line Replacement and Inflow & Infiltration Reduction Project for professional Architect/Engineering services. The selected Firm will be responsible for providing professional services including, but not limited to: feasibility and planning studies, comprehensive inflow & infiltration (I&I) study, preliminary engineering report, cost estimate preparation, planning, design, construction administration, inspection, other required engineering services, and administration as necessary for successful implementation of the project.

Firms interested in applying should visit <https://gwadd.org/rfps-public-input/> or contact Duane Sassi at (606) 780-0090, ext. 2204 or email duane.sassi@ky.gov for the full Request for Qualifications. Statements of qualifications must be received by 3:30 PM local time by Wednesday, September 2nd, 2026.

The City of Owingsville reserves the right to reject any and all responses, to waive any technicalities, and to negotiate with the respondent who most nearly meets the project requirements. The City of Owingsville is not responsible or liable for any costs incurred by the consultants replying to this request. The City of Owingsville is an equal opportunity employer and encourages responses from all qualified firms. Kentucky Relay Service for the hearing and speech impaired: 1-800-648-6056.

Published in the Bath County News-Outlook 08.12.26

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Published in the Bath County News-Outlook 08.12.26

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