

Cherokee Cannabis Opens Sales to Adults in NC This September

Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians to Open Recreational Cannabis Sales to All Adults in North Carolina

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians announced that their cannabis retailer, Great Smoky Cannabis Co., will begin selling cannabis products to all adults aged 21 and over starting September 7. This decision marks a significant expansion in cannabis accessibility on tribal lands in western North Carolina.

Announcement of Expanded Sales

Great Smoky Cannabis Co. shared the start date for recreational cannabis sales via social media, indicating that sales will commence at 10 a.m. on September 7. This expansion follows the store's initial opening for medical marijuana sales in April and its subsequent sales to tribal members and members of other federally recognized tribes starting July 4.

Background and Development

The decision to broaden cannabis sales comes after a referendum last September, where tribal members voted in favor of adult recreational use on their reservation and instructed the tribal council to draft regulations for such a market. The tribal council approved the necessary language in June, effectively decriminalizing cannabis on Eastern Band land, known as the Qualla Boundary.

Community Support and Concerns

While there is substantial support for recreational cannabis sales within the region, some residents express concerns about the potential for buyers to take the products outside tribal land. Marijuana possession or use remains illegal in North Carolina, except on sovereign tribal lands. Among North Carolina and its surrounding states, only Virginia has legalized recreational marijuana statewide.

Sovereignty and Legal Status

As a sovereign nation, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians has the authority to pass its own rules regarding cannabis. This sovereignty allows the tribe to establish and regulate a legal cannabis market within their territory, independent of North Carolina state laws.

Future Implications

The social media posts announcing the expanded sales did not provide additional details. However, Qualla Enterprises, the tribe's cannabis subsidiary, had previously outlined a phased approach to expand adult-use

sales, initially limiting them to tribal members.

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians' decision to open recreational cannabis sales to all adults marks a significant milestone in cannabis legalization within North Carolina. Starting September 7, Great Smoky Cannabis Co. will serve as a pioneering example of how tribal sovereignty can influence and lead regional cannabis policy. As the market develops, it will be closely watched by supporters and skeptics alike, shaping the future landscape of cannabis regulation in the region.

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