

Recreational Cannabis on the Horizon for NC Cherokee Dispensary, Tribal Council Member Reveals

Historic Opening of Cherokee Cannabis Dispensary

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians marked a significant milestone on April 20 with the grand opening of their cannabis dispensary on the Qualla Boundary, making history as North Carolina's first marijuana market.

Transition to Recreational Sales

While currently focused on medicinal cannabis, discussions surrounding the potential for recreational sales are gaining traction within the EBCI Tribal Council. Speculation mounts as a recreational marijuana law could pass as early as June, according to statements from Tribal Council members.

Legislative Progress

Despite North Carolina's stance on cannabis, Cherokee operates under its own laws, allowing for the legalization of medical marijuana within tribal land. The referendum held in September revealed overwhelming support for recreational marijuana, setting the stage for potential ordinance updates by Tribal Council.

Road to Legalization

If the ordinance passes, the Great Smoky Cannabis Co. could become North Carolina's first recreational marijuana dispensary, catering to the demand of both residents and visitors. However, legislative hurdles at the state level remain, with bills like the Marijuana Justice and Reinvestment Act facing challenges in the General Assembly.

Operational Considerations

Expanding to recreational use brings opportunities and challenges for the dispensary. With the potential for a significant increase in employees and product demand, operational logistics and law enforcement concerns come to the forefront.

Impact on Law Enforcement

The anticipated influx of customers for recreational cannabis poses logistical challenges for law enforcement agencies. Chief Carla Neadeau of the Cherokee Indian Police Department expressed concerns about

manpower and resources to manage the potential increase in visitors.

As the Cherokee Cannabis Dispensary paves the way for cannabis access in North Carolina, stakeholders navigate the complex landscape of regulation, public demand, and law enforcement readiness. The journey toward legalization reflects evolving attitudes toward cannabis and its role in healthcare and economic development.

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