

CRC has approved more than 500 conditional licenses

By **JACK FICHTER**
Cape May Star and Wave

192 conditional licenses in the first week of September.

A conditional license gives applicants more time to get property or municipal approval but does not allow the business to operate.

CRC Executive Director

Jeff Brown said the CRC had received 1,300 cannabis business applications as of Sept. 7. He said only 88 had yet to move forward to a completeness review.

The CRC sent 932 "cure letters" explaining to ap-

plicants how to correct their application for approval, Brown said.

He said the commission launched a new patient registry last week replacing a 10-year-old system. New patients no longer will have to wait an identification card to purchase cannabis. Instead, they will be allowed to use their authorization from a physician after creating an account in the system and going to a dispensary to make an initial purchase, he said.

Brown said compliance and investigations are a core function of the CRC. He said inspections are conducted prior to licensing a dispensary and the CRC conducts periodic site visits that include collecting samples of cannabis for testing, spot checks for security, review of inventory management and investigation of any complaints.

"When we do have significant violations, we take swift action," Brown said. "Since expansion, we took quick action when there were patient-access violations, issuing more than \$300,000 in fines levied for those violations to five ATCs (Alternative Treatment Centers)."

He said for the past four years, the state has ordered swift destruction or recall of cannabis after finding mold or other product quality issues.

"Because of the hard work of our team, I can tell you that we've had zero reported major adverse events related to legal products either medical or recreational," he said.

In October, the CRC will launch a statewide inventory tracking system that provides real-time information.

Workplace guidance

The CRC has released

cannabis workplace impairment guidance. It states employers should have in place processes for establishing reasonable suspicion of impairment.

"The statute says employers can no longer take adverse action against employees simply because there are cannabis metabolites in that person's bodily fluids," Brown said. "But they can develop reasonable evidence using objective means to determine that somebody is reasonably suspected of being impaired while at work."

A cognitive impairment test may be used, he said. An employer may designate a staff member to be responsible for assisting with determinations related to impairment. Brown said the staff member should have training related to determining impairment such as working in human resources.

"We make it very clear that the new law of the land is that employers cannot, unless they meet a certain carve out for federal contracts, take adverse action against an employee simply based on the presence of cannabis metabolites in their blood," he said.

More information is available under business resources at nj.gov/cannabis.

Wesley McWhite, CRC director of inclusion and diversity, said of the 192 applications for consideration, 91 were minority-owned, 10 were disabled veteran-owned and 97 were women-owned. Some awardees hold certifications in multiple categories.

The approvals included cultivators, manufacturers and retailers. Two local applicants, Shorehouse Canna and Potent Petals, were not among the approvals. Both applicants

previously told the Star and Wave they expect to open in spring 2023.

The CRC granted 45-day extensions to conditional license holders given the challenges of receiving municipal approvals and finding real estate, Brown said. The first conditional licenses issued were due to expire Oct. 1.

CRC Director Charles Barker said expanded ATCs as a whole were not upholding their commitments to patient access, social equity and collective bargaining agreements.

"This must change," he said.

Barker said more than \$100 million in revenue has been generated since the start of legal cannabis sales in April. He said there are not enough connections to local communities that have been most affected by the failed war on drugs and not enough partnerships with organizations that assist those communities.

During public comment, Buddy Greenberg said the CRC has been slow in getting new businesses licensed and thus is harming social equity, diversity and small business applicants.

"The adult-use market is an oligopoly of eight MSOs (Multiple State Operators) not even from New Jersey who had the political clout to get their ATCs expanded to adult use ahead of everyone else," Greenberg said. "Those guys got fast-tracked and opened within two weeks of the New Jersey Senate hearing."

He said no one else in New Jersey has been granted an annual license to operate in the adult-use market. He said the CRC has granted only conditional licenses.

State cannabis commission has approved 505 conditional licenses

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City to refurbish Beach Avenue restrooms

By **JACK FICHTER**
Cape May Star and Wave

ways cheaper to do it yourself, and that applies to towns as well.

CAPE MAY — It's al-

At a Sept. 6 City Council

meeting, City Manager Mike Voll said the city received a price of \$335,000 to replace restrooms along Beach Avenue at Second, Trenton and Wilmington avenues. He said the city's talented tradesmen in the Department of Public Works would refurbish the restrooms at a cost of about \$40,000 to \$50,000 each, including one at Gurney Street.

"We're going to save a lot of money by using our own people to refurbish all those different facilities," Voll said.

The Department of Public Works will also refurbish the Sunset Pavilion at the cove this winter, he said.

Councilwoman Lorraine Baldwin said an architect and engineers were creating plans for restrooms next to Convention Hall on the Promenade. She said the project could be put out for bid in a few months with construction taking place during the winter.

A portable restroom trailer will be removed from Beach Avenue, Baldwin said.

Voll reported a project is under way to repaint crosswalks and sharrows on most of the city's roads.

Solar panels have been installed on the roof of City Hall but are not operational. Voll said supply chain issues have delayed the arrival of a converter.

The city received a new "black and white" police vehicle, a Ford hybrid, he said. An electric Mustang is expected to be delivered by the end of the month and an electric pickup truck by the end of the year, Voll said.

He said some older police cars are being converted for use by inspectors in the city's Construction Office.

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