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A Mixed Message

Marijuana Has Been Legalized In Two States And Is Becoming More Accepted By The Public. Is That Compromising Efforts To Keep Kids Away From The Drug?

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first of a two-part series examining the mixed messages young people are receiving about marijuana since its legalization for recreational use in some parts of the United States.

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
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With Colorado and Washington state legalizing recreational marijuana, local school and South Dakota law enforcement officials say delivering a clear message about the substance to kids is getting more difficult.

"It definitely sends a mixed message, in my opinion," said Hughes County Sheriff Mike Leidholt, who is also president of the National Sheriffs' Association. "D.A.R.E. and other programs are telling kids to stay away from drugs, and then you've got Washington and Colorado that have essentially legalized it. Worse, you've got the federal government, specifically with attorney general (Eric) Holder, deciding he's not going to take legal action against those states that are clearly in violation of federal law. It sends a mixed message and muddies the water for those efforts to teach kids about the use of drugs."

Last August, Holder announced that the Justice Department would not take action against legal dispensaries in Colorado and Washington.

Yankton School District (YSD) Superintendent Wayne Kindle echoed Leidholt's sentiments, saying he doesn't envy the school districts in Colorado that are now faced with the issue of marijuana legalization on a local level.

"For years, schools across the country have implemented the D.A.R.E. programs and counseling services and brought in speakers and presentations related to the dangers of drugs and alcohol. I am very concerned about the misconceptions and perceptions the legalization of marijuana will have upon students."

WAYNE KINDLE

Among 10th graders, approximately 4 percent said they smoke marijuana daily and 18 percent said they had done so within the last month.

A CNN/Opinion Research poll earlier this month showed that 55 percent of Americans think marijuana should be legal, while 44 percent don't think that should come to pass. The number who support legalization is up 12 points from just more than a year ago.

An October Gallup poll showed support for legalization even higher at 58 percent.

"I don't think legalization is the way to go," Leidholt said. "I'm



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KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Officer Pat Nolz of the Yankton Police Department holds up a jar of marijuana that was confiscated in a recent arrest. Law enforcement, schools and counselors continue to sell the message to youth that marijuana is dangerous drug, but recent public votes to legalize recreational marijuana in Colorado and Washington — plus the use on some states of marijuana for medicinal purposes — and some people concerned that the efforts to dissuade kids from using pot may be compromised. "It definitely sends a mixed message, in my opinion," stated Hughes County Sheriff Mike Leidholt, who is also president of the National Sheriffs' Association.

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J. Hunhoff



B. Hunhoff



Stevens

Legislative Preview

Legislators Look Ahead To 2014 Session

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
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PIERRE — With an improved economy and a \$70 million windfall from unclaimed property funds, South Dakota legislators don't anticipate the budget woes of past years when the 2014 session opens Tuesday.

However, area lawmakers also warn of the need to remain cautious about spending.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard has taken the right approach by treating the unclaimed property funds as one-time money, said District 18 Rep. Mike Stevens (R-Yankton).

"There are really a lot of illusions (about the budget)," Stevens said. "If it weren't for the unclaimed property that we got, our revenue would be pretty flat or a small increase."

Stevens pointed to the economic setback suffered by western South Dakota because of the Atlas blizzard in October, along with the state's reduced revenues from gambling.

"We have got this tremendous increase in (funds from) unclaimed property, and some might think that we have a bonanza of revenue, but that's not necessarily true," he said.

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Jackley Releases Economic Probe Documents

BY DIRK LAMMERS
Associated Press

SIoux FALLS — South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley said Friday that he is releasing criminal investigative and state grand jury information to the Department of Legislative Audit to assist with its examination of the Governor's Office of Economic Development.

Jackley and state Auditor General Martin Guindon filed the joint motion with the 6th Circuit Court on Friday, and it was approved by the judge the same day. It will be up to the state Department of Legislative Audit to decide what records will be made public when it issues its report, Jackley said.

"The Auditor General will further define what is necessary," he said.

Guindon said he's not sure what documents may be made public with the report and that he cannot comment on an ongoing investigation. He expects the report to be completed by Jan. 24.

"That's still our goal," Guindon said. Gov. Dennis Daugaard announced an



Jackley

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**Northern Lights
Public Open House**

1.13.14

Tours, hors d'oeuvres, refreshments and giveaways will be provided.

For more information, please call 605-668-8000.

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