

Anthony
Apologize for the article that appeared in the AZ News.



By: Tom Perkins

Caregiver's Cup: Ypsilanti to host marijuana competition

Posted: 6:05 a.m. December 27, 2009

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Ypsilanti Township will play host to what's being billed as the nation's largest cannabis competition next month.

The inaugural "Caregiver's Cup" invites medicinal marijuana growers to bring their buds to the [Ann Arbor Marriott Ypsilanti at Eagle Crest](#) Jan. 30-31. They'll have the opportunity to be crowned the best pot grower by certified patients prescribed to use medicinal marijuana.

MIcaregiverscup.org

Organizers with the Michigan Marijuana Chamber of Commerce expect nearly 30,000 guests throughout the weekend. They're using the competition to raise public and political awareness on the recent legalization of medicinal marijuana in the state.

They say that while legalization of the plant is a positive development, the industry burgeoning around it needs greater oversight.

"There are so many gray areas in the law that there needs to be greater regulation," said Darrell Stazros, director of corporate sponsorship for the MMCC. "There have been caregivers who are taking advantage of patients." outrageous!

Under the law, patients have the written approval of a doctor to use the plant for relief from cancer, multiple sclerosis, paraplegia or other medical conditions.

Caregivers are those licensed by the state to grow up to 12 plants for up to five patients. But no oversight agency checks on where or how they grow the plant, which Stazros calls one of the problems. outrageous

Stazros said the product suffers and safety risks increase if plants are grown in poor conditions by people uneducated in the process, leaving room for abuse of the law. Anyone who doesn't have a drug-related felony can complete a course and become a caregiver. outrageous

"If you're in a neighborhood, would you want your neighbor's house full of weed? Probably not, but that's what's going on," Stazros said. "We are 100 percent crazy pro-marijuana, but we do need to think there needs to be regulations involved."

The MMCC envisions designated growing zones where caregivers can grow their plants, while keeping them all in one spot to improve oversight. It would also allow authorities to keep tabs on who is growing the plants. Omigod - this is really bad

Stazros cited an example of a 55-year-old Detroit woman who allowed a 21-year-old man



Darrell Stazros (left) and Anthony Freed of the Michigan Marijuana Chamber of Commerce are pictured in their Ypsilanti office. They are two of the organizers of the Caregiver's Cup. Tom Perkins | For AnnArbor.com

Marijuana consumers

Freed!

to be her caregiver. The man promised to provide her with her medicine, but instead began demanding money and sex for it.

"Situations like that happen all the time, and that's where there needs to be regulations on caregivers," he said. "Things like that shouldn't be happening."

It knows nothing It is absolutely unacceptable

While discussion on the medicinal marijuana industry and how to shape it is one major component of the weekend, the competition is the big draw.

The 100 caregivers entering the contest are asked to provide 2.5 ounces of marijuana to the panel of 140 judges. They'll ingest, smoke or vaporize the pot in designated areas in or outside the hotel that are open only to patients.

Judges will be grouped according to their recognized illness, with the purpose of allowing doctors to examine them and ask questions about the effects.

Anthony Freed, executive director of the MMCC, said that's unprecedented in this type of venue.

OK "These questions are going to be asked and, with a little research, are going to be answered," he said. "It seems like such an inconsequential thing, but we can say for the first time physicians will be working one-on-one. When you think about it, that's a big step away from where we were 12 or 24 months ago."

OK The information collected will be used to research the medical benefits of the plants and for pharmaceutical development.

OK Freed and Stazros expect the crowd to include a strange blend of tie-dye and suit-and-tie types. Stazros said one prominent state Republican legislator may announce his candidacy for the U.S. Senate, but declined to say who.

OK The organizers are also working carefully to ensure law enforcement is on board.

OK The MMCC has already met with and received support from Washtenaw County law enforcement agencies, as well as the [U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration](#). Those agencies also are invited for a panel discussion.

OK Roughly 50 vendors will be on hand, and the weekend is filled with seminars on everything from hydroponics to accounting. Freed and Stazros have invited politicians at all levels and are framing the event as more of a jobs fair, as they believe the economic impact of the industry's growth in the community could be significant.

"One of our goals is making politicians realize that someone is going to do it, and if it's you, there is a financial windfall," Freed said.

Entry for two days is \$25 and one day is \$15. For a full schedule of events and more

