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Vt. pot officials trying to avoid a bad high

Regulators see too many shops in too few communities, pause new retail licenses

By Kevin Cullen
GLOBE STAFF

MONTPELIER, Vt. — In June 2022, three months before retail recreational marijuana sales were about to start, the state's legislative fiscal office predicted Vermont would have a fledgling cannabis industry doing \$86 million in sales within two years.

But when June rolled around this year, the numbers were even better than expected: Eighty retail shops registered \$128 million in sales, kicking back some \$25 million in taxes into public coffers —

more tax revenue than from alcohol sales.

By most measures, the rollout of the legal cannabis industry in Vermont has been a success. But it's been uneven, with a concentration of dispensaries in a handful of communities, while most of the state has so far refused to host any. So Vermont regulators are taking a breath, this month halting applications for new retail licenses and cultivation areas larger than 1,000 square feet while they review how licenses are distributed around the state.

'We're not trying to be protectionists, but as we've seen in other states, too much and too big doesn't work well.'

JAMES PEPPER
Chairperson of the Vermont Cannabis Control Board

The Legislature, meanwhile, has instructed the state's Cannabis Control Board to tweak the way it awards licenses, taking population and density into consideration, with a view to more evenly distribute them across the state — a task made more difficult by the fact that only about one-third of the state's cities and towns have voted to approve retail sales within their communities.

That has created clusters of stores in some communities, while greatly limiting available markets to growers. In tiny Morrisville, for ex-

MARIJUANA, Page A7

Housing law battle in front of top court

AG's suit vs. Milton has big implications for state's effort to ease shortage

By Andrew Brinker
GLOBE STAFF

One of Massachusetts' premier housing laws will go before the state's highest court on Monday. The stakes are high, and towns all over Eastern Massachusetts will be watching closely.

The Supreme Judicial Court is set to hear oral arguments on Attorney General Andrea Campbell's lawsuit challenging the Town of Milton for defying the MBTA Communities Act, after voters there in February shot down a zoning plan that could've cleared the way for hundreds of new housing units in the suburb just south of Boston. The case is a key test of Campbell's ability to enforce the law — which aims to compel cities and towns to help solve the state's widespread housing shortage — and comes as dozens more communities are due this fall to vote on zoning plans of their own.

The SJC's six justices will focus on a few fairly narrow legal questions, but the implications of their ruling may well be wide-reaching and shape the state's bid to dig out of its deep housing shortage. MBTA Communities represents Massachusetts' most pointed attempt to produce more housing in decades, and the principle behind it —

HOUSING LAW, Page A7



JONATHAN WIGGS/GLOBE STAFF

Stephanie Barros (left), a mental health associate at Good Samaritan Medical Center in Brockton, was greeted by Dr. Alastair Bell, Boston Medical Center CEO, Tuesday morning after Good Samaritan was acquired by BMC from Steward Health Care.

BMC charts a future after Steward

Challenges loom as it takes over St. Elizabeth's and Good Samaritan hospitals



BMC has more than doubled its hospital beds after taking over Good Samaritan Medical Center (above) and St. Elizabeth's Medical Center.

By Robert Weisman
GLOBE STAFF

Dr. Alastair Bell, chief executive of Boston Medical Center, got up early on Tuesday, the first day of the post-Steward era in Massachusetts. He drove to Brockton to greet caregivers as they arrived at Good Samaritan Medical Center. In the afternoon, he was back in Boston, welcoming staffers at St. Elizabeth's Medical Center as upbeat music played and managers handed out doughnuts in the lobby.

That day, they became employees of BMC, the state's largest safety net hospital — now by a long shot. Long a health care anchor in the heart of Boston, the system has emerged from the Steward ashes with more than twice as many hospital beds and a regional footprint, the most essential player in the state's rescue of Steward's tottering hospitals.

Now comes the hard part: making sure the troubled hospitals it rescued can survive, and serve their patients, in the new alignment.

BMC's chief has no illusions about the monumental challenge ahead. Both of the hospitals it acquired had been

BMC, Page A10

Israel steps up its attacks on Gaza, Lebanon

On eve of Oct. 7 anniversary, region fears raid on Iran

By Adam Rasgon, Isabel Kershner, and Norimitsu Onishi
NEW YORK TIMES

JERUSALEM — Israel intensified its fight on two fronts Sunday, stepping up operations against Hamas in the Gaza Strip and carrying out more airstrikes on Hezbollah in Lebanon, as the region braced for Israel to hit back at Iran for its barrage of ballistic missiles last week.

The expected strike's potential to ignite an all-out war between Israel and Iran cast a pall over the eve of the anniversary of the Oct. 7 Hamas-led attack, which led to the upending of the Middle East and exposed the limits of US influence in the region.

The Israeli military appeared to label the vast majority of northern Gaza as an evacuation

MIDEAST, Page A5

Protest halts traffic

Thousands of pro-Palestinian demonstrators marched through Boston on Sunday, snarling traffic along Storrow Drive. **B1.**

Global rallies

Crowds joined pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli events across Europe, North Africa, and Asia. **A5.**

Black-owned businesses feeling left behind

After George Floyd's murder came a surge of support. Now that's faded.

By Stella Tannenbaum
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

As a DJ spun upbeat R&B and hip-hop tunes, customers meandered through rows of white tents in a Seaport park one recent Sunday, browsing vendors' wares, including candles, jewelry, and hot sauce.

It was the monthly Black Owned Bos. market, which runs from May to October, and spotlights local Black-owned businesses. But as the market nears the end of its fifth season on Oct. 20, its vibrancy belies growing concerns among many Black entrepreneurs that their community is being left behind.

After George Floyd's murder by Minneapolis police in May 2020, shopping at Black-owned businesses became a popular way for many people to act on their support for upending systemic racism. Since then, some consumers have moved on, and many Black business owners said they have seen a dip in sales, investments, and overall support, all of which can be crucial to helping combat the Boston-area's stark racial wealth gap.

Rose Staram officially launched her Dorchester-based event production company RoseMark Production in June 2019.

BLACK-OWNED, Page A10



JESSICA RINALDI/GLOBE STAFF

Sandra Springer (left) and SaiAnna Hilaire set up their Sweet Glam stand at Black Owned Bos.'s weekend Seaport market.



Getting dripped

Monday: Breezy with showers.

High 61-66, low 49-54.

Tuesday: Partly cloudy.

High 62-67, low 45-50.

Sunrise: 6:48. Sunset: 6:15.

Obituaries, **B6.**

Comics and Weather, **D4-5.**

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Suggested retail price
\$4.00



Swayman gets extension



The Bruins have signed goalie Jeremy Swayman to a deal worth \$66 million

over eight seasons, making him one of the highest-paid goalies in the NHL. **C1.**

Boston hotel workers at the Hilton Boston Park Plaza and the Hilton Boston Logan Airport went on strike Sunday, demanding higher wages. **B1.**

Hurricane Milton intensified Sunday with the Tampa Bay area in its sights, triggering evacuation orders. **A2.**