

# Local Home Edition

An Edition of The Republican

EDITORIALS, C6

LETTERS, C6

TV GUIDE, C5

C | The Republican. | THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2018

CHICOPEE | HOLYOKE | SOUTH HADLEY | GRANBY

HOLYOKE

## Program eyes training residents for pot jobs

### Participants chosen for 'social equity program'

BY MIKE PLAISANCE  
mplaisance@repub.com

Training Holyokers for jobs in the marijuana industry is the goal of a new state program.

"Given the number of job opportunities to come in this industry, it is our priority to make sure Holyoke residents are prepared to fill these openings," Holyoke Mayor Alex B.

Morse said Tuesday.

The Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission has chosen the city, the Cannabis Community Care and Research Network (C3RN) of Somerville and Holyoke Community College (HCC) to work as a team on the training for the Holyoke area, a press release said.

"The project scope, collaborative



ALEX MORSE

partnerships, timelines and next steps are subject to further negotiations with the Cannabis Control Commission," the press release said.

"This model cannabis education-to-employment program will build on HCC and the city of Holyoke's efforts to

revitalize the city and surrounding areas and will bring the highest level of evidence-based education to the workforce," the press release said.

C3RN is a marijuana industry consultant and advocate. The organization describes itself on its website as "a group of like minded cannabis industry, advocacy, academic, public health, clinical, patient, policy, and community experts that embrace open-source principles to drive collaborative science in the cannabis

industry."

Dr. Marion McNabb told The Republican in a text message Tuesday: "We hope this program will begin to right the wrongs of a failed drug war and work to increase the availability of evidence-based education for the state and cannabis industry in Holyoke and greater Massachusetts. This is the first phase of a multi-stage procurement process and C3RN has only been selected as a qualified training

SEE **JOBS**, PAGE C3

# Jobs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1

vendor to date and the project is subject to further contract negotiations with the CCC.”

She added in the press release, “We are hopeful the training models produced in this project will have wide, culturally relevant, lasting and technically sound impacts on addressing stigma against cannabis use in Massachusetts, the U.S., and globally.”

Holyoke Mayor Alex B. Morse said in an email:

“The decision by the Cannabis Control Commission to have Holyoke be a site for social equity training will bring lasting economic impact in our city. We already offer the best cost profile and platform for cannabis growing in the state, adding to that the workforce development component will on strengthen the industry’s success here further, as well as its positive impact for our residents.

“Given the number of job opportunities to come in this industry, it is our priority to make sure Holyoke residents are prepared to fill these openings. Coupled with city’s request that companies strive to ensure 30 percent of their employees are from Holyoke, is our belief that it is incumbent upon the city to do our part to ensure there is a continual pool of qualified applicants from our city to make sure these numbers are met. I commend HCC and our partner organizations for their innovation and diligence in helping make this happen in our city.”

Jeff Hayden, HCC vice president of business and community services:

“The goal of this one-year pilot program will be to train and link students to employment opportunities for those from Holyoke and greater Western Massachusetts,” Hayden said in a press release.

“The purpose of this two-pronged training is to help individuals get placed in a job and to find long-term career pathways.

“We will be training students in customer service, dosing and extraction methods and techniques, but when it is time for students to work with actual product, that will take place off-site through our partner C3RN. As the education partner, we want to ensure that local residents and students have access to opportunities — including those in emerging industries such as cannabis — that lead to jobs.”

No cannabis or cannabis products will be used at HCC facilities where the training takes place, he said.

With marijuana legal in Massachusetts, the training program is part of the Cannabis Control Commission’s effort to help people who come from areas and groups that have been overly affected by marijuana arrests.

The commission has identified 29 cities and towns in Massachusetts that have been “disproportionately harmed” over the years by marijuana arrests and incarceration. These include Holyoke, Springfield, West Springfield, Amherst,

Greenfield and Worcester.

Students in the program will be trained for marijuana industry jobs as, the press release said:

- Cannabis cultivation assistant
- Dispensary patient advocate, “bud tender.”
- Extraction technician assistant
- Cannabis pantry cook, cannabis culinary assistant.

The Cannabis Control Commission’s budget of nearly \$8 million includes \$300,000 for community outreach programs. Such programs are required in the recreational marijuana law to help the commission in including communities disproportionately harmed by marijuana arrests and incarceration and engagement with minorities, women, veterans and farmers, officials have said.

The next step is for the commission to develop programming and negotiate contracts

with the organizations and businesses chosen in the social equity training program, a commission spokeswoman said.