



MEMORANDUM

TO: Chair and Members
of the Marijuana Control Board

DATE: January 31, 2016

FROM: Cynthia Franklin, Director

RE: Director's Report

New Name, Website and FAQ's

The office officially began operating under its new name, the Alcohol and Marijuana Control Office (AMCO) in January after OMB changed our name in its budget documents. Staff has continued to improve and update the website to reflect the name change and keep notifications current. We posted a large updated set of FAQ's on February 3, 2016.

Travel and Outreach

Governor Walker has restricted travel for state staff and boards and commissions for fiscal reasons. Governor Walker has requested that boards and commissions limit in-person meetings requiring travel to one in 2016. Since the board last met on November 20, 2015, I traveled to Valdez and Kodiak to give presentations regarding the board's progress with the regulation of commercial marijuana establishments. Both communities financed my trip. I traveled to Juneau to give a presentation to the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee. I conducted additional presentations in Anchorage to AML, the Juvenile Justice Section of the Alaska Bar Association and the ALPHA Health Summit.

Position Recruitment and Staffing Update

On December 21, 2015, James Hoelscher began his new role as Enforcement Supervisor. The office is continuing its recruitment for one additional investigator in Anchorage and one in Fairbanks. After those positions are filled, the office will be fully staffed. The Governor has enacted a hiring freeze on state recruitment. The enforcement officer recruitments fall within an exemption, but none of our other positions qualify for an exemption. We hope that all staff will remain with us as we tackle the challenges to come.



Technology Updates

We have been diligently working in with DCCED's IT Department to get a licensing database in place to receive electronic applications on February 24, 2016. The RFP project for seed-to-sale software is progressing under the direction of the procurement manager for DCCED. The expected contract date as set forth in the public documents is February 16, 2016 with full implementation by May 23, 2016.

Legislative Update

Two of the issues expressed as statutory needs at board meetings in 2015 are contained in a Committee Substitute version of HB 75 which is currently in the Senate Rules Committee. The CS reflects the enabling statutory language to conduct national background checks and enables established villages to opt out of commercial marijuana establishments by petition election.

Frequently Asked Questions

The FAQ section of the website has been recently updated to reflect the questions that keep coming and to update the former answers in light of the board's work on the regulations. As the board will see in its packet under the Marijuana Mailbox tab, we are receiving a lot of questions. The mailbox does not reflect the questions we are getting by phone and from folks walking into the office. One of our biggest challenges moving forward will be how to respond to the volume of questions when we do not have anyone on our small staff who can be dedicated to this task. We ask that the board join the staff in encouraging potential licensees with questions to use all the tools provided (FAQ's, Video training, Regulations) before asking additional questions. It is very apparent that many of the questioners have not read any of the regulations.