

I think we need greed here

By Tim Linscott, Editor

I am usually not what I would call a greedy person. However, fair is fair. In light of the events that have transpired in Colorado since Jan. 1, I feel I, and the rest of all Nebraskans, need to be a bit greedier.

Recently, I spoke with Jim Brueggeman, Perkins County Sheriff, about the influx of marijuana coming into the county from Colorado.

The sheriff is a reasonable man who has seen a lot in his years in law enforcement. By talking with him I can tell this is a bit of uncharted territory, as marijuana seizures are almost a daily occurrence for area law enforcement.

Iowa and Nebraska have been at odds for years over gambling. Gamblers from Nebraska head to Iowa daily and spend fortunes.

The same situation is here in Nebraska with Colorado. Many people head to Colorado on a weekly basis to purchase marijuana to smoke or eat there or take back home.

It is illegal in this state to have marijuana, therefore, those taking it back to their hometown or home state, for that matter, are dealing with law enforcement cracking down on them.

Brueggeman noted that when he has to pick up family in Denver at the airport, he has noticed lately a huge influx of cars from Iowa and Minnesota.

There is a long line of cars from Nebraska, not just this part of the state, making the trip to Denver and other locations in Colorado, to purchase marijuana legally.

Between the first day of legal marijuana sales, Jan. 1, and Jan. 8, Colorado has served thousands of people and accrued more than \$5 million in taxed and regulated sales, according to an article by Ashley Wright.

According to a report from Fox News in February, Colorado officials expect retail marijuana sales tax to put nearly \$20 million into state coffers in the current fiscal year and more than twice that next year.

Here is my idea for Colorado politicians: Give neighboring states part of the money for having to fight marijuana trafficking, DUID (Driving Under the Influence of Drugs), possession and other issues law enforcement agencies are dealing with on a daily basis.

In talking with law enforcement agents about the issue, one recent drug bust had a suspect stopped with an explosive device.

Weapons, meth and other illicit items are starting to come along with these stops.

Law enforcement in the region is under-manned, with little funds to begin with, let alone amp up the fight against drugs with this recent rash of people coming across the border.

I imagine for every stop and seizure law enforcement in this area makes, three to four cars drive right on by with equal to or more amounts of marijuana inside.

Colorado state officials could allocate \$2-4 million per year out of the budget to help neighboring states uphold federal law.

I feel this is only right that a state that causes a dilemma help alleviate it as such with the excess money coming in to the state of Colorado.

Within six months of medical marijuana being legalized in Colorado, \$9 million was set aside to balance the budget. With the recreational use possibly bringing many more times than that per year, the just and fair thing for Colorado to do is help the states that are now upholding federal law at the sake of taxpayer dollars from a floodgate opened by the recreational marijuana law. In speaking with legal and law enforcement officials from the region, they all noted that people from Colorado have had a bit of an attitude about the use of marijuana in other states.

They act unaware that it is illegal elsewhere and a bit pompous that they can't just smoke the drug anywhere.

We as Nebraskans should be pompous and ask for money to help fight drug trafficking. I feel people are buying more than they could use for recreational purposes and are transporting it across state lines to re-sell back home, which includes Nebraska.

The underground, black market is about to explode and with it violence will come. We need the tools to fight this problem and Colorado needs to pay up.