

Energy bills driving greener Nev. weed business

By Daniel Rothberg, Las Vegas Sun

Beneath a purple glow, in a warehouse sharing the street with two indistinguishable strip malls, Kevin Biernacki is growing around 100 pounds of medical marijuana. The purpose of this facility, owned by The Grove, is no different than other cultivation sites in Nevada. Yet, the roughly 480 industrial lamps suspended over clusters of cannabis set this place apart.

Those energy-efficient lights allowed The Grove to slash its power bill. The decision to use LED lamps might seem unsexy at first, simply a marginal deduction on a complicated balance sheet. But it's not. It is the type of business decision many experts believe can offer huge benefits in a growing market.

That's because indoor cultivation centers, which use lamps to mimic the sun and air conditioning to keep temperatures hospitable, suck up power. NV Energy has projected that some cannabis-growing operations could use up to 5 megawatts at one time, enough energy to power about 3,000 homes.

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