

Colo. offers lessons on legalizing recreational pot

By Colton Lochhead, Las Vegas Review-Journal

DENVER – Just beyond the Rocky Mountains, an industry that once conjured images of dank basements and back-alley deals is blossoming under state regulation.

After a sluggish start in sales following the 2012 vote to decriminalize marijuana, Colorado's pot trade – and corresponding tax revenue – is booming as consumers from within and outside the state flock to cannabis shops.

Some predictions made during the campaign by legalization supporters have proved true: Fewer people are being arrested. And despite initial fears that legalization would cause a rampant increase in drug use among Colorado's youth, teens aren't smoking more weed, according to the state Department of Public Health and Environment.

But Colorado's first-in-the-nation dive into a legal pot market also has come with unanticipated problems and failed predictions.

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