

Final OK of synthetic marijuana ordinance planned

By Frank Boyett

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The Henderson Fiscal Court plans Tuesday to pass a final reading of an ordinance outlawing synthetic marijuana.

The herbal mixtures often are labeled as incense or potpourri, but marketed as perfectly legal alternatives to illegal drugs. The manufacturers often change the chemical formula to keep one step ahead of the law. Two weeks ago, a parade of witnesses testified to the Fiscal Court about the ill effects of the man-made substances, such as seizures or psychotic episodes.

County Attorney Steve Gold was working on the ordinance at the time Judge-executive Hugh McCormick approached him to ask him to draft one, McCormick said.

Gold "did an outstanding job putting it together," McCormick said. "It's real thorough. Will they find a way around it? Yeah, eventually. But they're going to have to work pretty hard."

Similar efforts are under way at the state and federal levels, and the Henderson City Commission also has passed a practically identical ordinance on first reading.

The Fiscal Court meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday in the top-floor meeting room of the Henderson County Courthouse. Other items on the agenda include:

State codes: The court will consider first readings of two ordinances that formally will adopt the national electrical code and the state building code. McCormick said there are no major differences between existing county codes and the ones that will be adopted at the insistence of state authorities to have uniform codes statewide.

"We've already got the electrical inspectors," which are city Codes Administrator Don Summers within the city limits and Mike Villines outside the city. "We just need to go through the process. The counties that don't have anything now are the ones it's going to impact."

Road Department: The court will consider two requests from the Road Department. One involves getting safety training for personnel and the other involves purchasing "a scale on our bucket that will tell us how much we're sending out in each truck," McCormick said. "We'll be able to track our rock a lot more closely."

Software: The county's information technology manager, Brent Jacobs, will make a request to buy the latest Microsoft Office suite for about 75 computers, mostly at the courthouse and the Road Department.



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