

'Vape' store opens its doors in Newberg

Hoping to change the way consumers smoke, Newberg Vapors sells a form of electronic cigarettes

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When Ed and Laura Wiggins heard about a storefront opening on First Street, they seized the opportunity. Now, six months after entertaining the idea of opening a shop, they opened Newberg Vapors Jan. 11.

"We're smokers. I was a smoker until about seven years ago when I got a case of bronchial pneumonia," Ed Wiggins said. So he quit, but started missing cigarettes.

"So I picked up cigars and was eventually smoking a cigar a day," he said. "But then I came across this product. I started using it and I thought, 'Wow, I've got to do this. I've

got to help other people to get off the traditional cigarette.'"

Wiggins and his wife sell vaporizers. They look like colorful, long pipes. Battery operated, the "vapes" burn an oil-based liquid called "juice" that contains nicotine. Essentially,

they are electronic cigarettes.

"It can't be classified as a safer alternative, but it is cleaner," he said, cleaner than traditional cigarettes.

"Ed Wiggins, Newberg Vapors helped a lot of people to quit smokes."

that is. "It makes life feel a little better. Kids don't have to go to school smelling like an old ashtray, that's how we got here."

The juice comes in a variety of flavors — Newberg Vapors has 25 — so far ranging from chocolate-banana, apple, triple



Gary Allen / Newberg Graphic

New alternative — Vaporizers at Newberg Vapors, a new store on First Street, still produce smoke. But co-owner Ed Wiggins said not only are they cleaner than traditional cigarettes, but often leave little to no smell in the air.

menthol and watermelon — and emits minimal aroma.

"I don't smell like cigarettes," Ed Wiggins said. "They aren't entirely scent free, the worst is probably tobacco flavored."

The juices also range in nicotine content. He said they have flavors that contain no nicotine, and the concentration ranges up to 24 milligrams — the equivalent of nicotine ingested by a pack-and-a-half-a-day smoker.

"It's not a quit-smoking device, but it has helped a lot of people to quit smokes," he said. "The nicotine can taper down to zero and then you can toss the device."

But despite some of the juices containing no nicotine, he said he tries to deter non-smokers from using vapes.

"If they just want flavor because of the e-hookah craze, I will sell to them but I'll tell them it's not as good for you as not doing anything," Ed Wiggins said.

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He said he wants to operate the shop with his conscience clear, which includes not selling to minors.

"It's not illegal in the state of Oregon or city of Newberg to sell these to minors, but I can't sell to anyone that looks under 18 and I won't sell to them," he said. "If they're with someone who's 18 and they're buying two devices, I won't sell to them either. This product is going to get in the hands of teenagers one way or another, but I don't want it to be on my conscience. It's more a sense of what's

moral and what's right."

He said there are some shops, including one in Tigard, that do sell to teenagers less than 18, because nicotine isn't federally regulated, not yet anyway.

"I feel to make our buck I want to do it the right way and honestly," he said.

Currently, Ed Wiggins said there isn't a huge market in Newberg for the relatively new product, but he thinks it will grow pretty quickly.

"There are people ages 18 to 70 doing this. A lot of your older people are less apt to want to switch over, but the ones who give it a try are surprised," he

said. "I was talking to this lady who's smoked for 30 years who hasn't had a cigarette in over a month (after trying a vaporizer). That's saying a lot for a product the government doesn't approve of."

He said he hopes to continually expand.

"When we're done, there will be 200 flavors," he said. "And we will be setting up a lounge at some point."

The shop is located at 809 E. First St. and is open from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. For more information, visit www.newbergvapors.com.