



AM

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Center · Torrington · Veteran · Yoder

Legal high also risky

New drug swaggers into town

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In its cute little jar, it looks like a clump of spices, but that's where any resemblance to something so innocuous ends.

Posh is being marketed as a potpourri, but its primary use is as an alternative to marijuana. When smoked, users say it produces a more intense, longer high than they ever experienced smoking pot. The effect on users is, according to Torrington Peace Officer Diane Servantez, very concerning. And its status as a legal sub-



stance is not likely to change anytime soon.

"His physical appearance was that of someone who had been under the influence of methamphetamine for about five years," Servantez said, describing an adolescent she interviewed who was under the influence of Posh. "His face was pale, under his eyes were red and he couldn't even keep his head up."

Posh is simply another name used to market JWH-018, a form of

See LETHAL, A6

Lethal: New drug swaggers in

From page A1

synthetic marijuana created by Dr. John W. Huffman at Clemson University in 1988. Available since at least 2002, it was originally called Spice, with subsequent incarnations called Spice Gold, K-2, Puff, and many other names.

It is basically three or more different herbs, most often damiana, mullein and other dried, vegetative material. It was originally sprayed with HU-210, a synthetic marijuana strain developed at Hofstra University. HU-210 is now illegal in 19 countries, and is classified as a Schedule 1 narcotic in nine states (Alabama, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, Georgia, New York, Tennessee and Utah).

Two counties, Fulton County, Missouri and Boone County, Arkansas, held quorum courts and under emergency ordinance

banned the purchase, possession, sale, or offering for sale of Spice and K-2.

In response, the newer JWH-018 is now most often used to treat herbs with a synthetic cannaboid, and with it comes a new set of red tape before it can be legislated upon.

"The FDA (Food and Drug Administration) and the AMA (American Medical Association) work hand-in-hand in determining whether a substance has any medicinal value before they give it to us," DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) Agent William Nagel said. "Spice was marketed as a non-consumable product, so no tests were done initially to determine its potential danger as a controlled substance."

"The same tests have to be done again because this is a different chemical," he said. "It could be a few months before there are any definitive results. The last three numbers

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to town, poses safety risks

refer to potency, with 018 being the least potent and 200 being the most. And that the THC content is 100 to 800 times more powerful than marijuana.”

As such, substances sprayed with any JWH products are classified as “regulated: unknown,” and are completely legal to possess and sell. However, smoking such substances is another matter.

“Any type of smoking other than tobacco is prohibited,” Nagel said. “But as of yet, not enough testing has been done to develop a field test to determine if someone is under the influence.”

Servantez is also a certified DRE, or Drug Recognition Expert. Part of her job is to keep up with illegal drugs in Wyoming and recognize how they work. She says she has not seen anything quite like this.

“The tricky thing with spice is that it’s not

detectable on a urine exam or a blood test,” Servantez said. “I work with juvenile probation very closely. Our probation kids have just run havoc because we can’t test for this stuff. They know they can do it.”

“At least with other drugs, we knew what they were and how to treat for them in case of an overdose,” Servantez said. “There are no known side effects for this stuff. “(If our) friends were to take us to the emergency room, the doctors there would basically be treating a medical mystery.”

Posh was found being sold at one business in Torrington, although another business was found selling several similar products named Rebel Spice, Blueberry Mamba and Mr. Smiley. Although they appear to be the same type of product, no testing has yet been done on these other products to determine if they contain JWH-018.