

Watch the Pot: 'Drive High, Get a DUI' Ads Chide Newly Legal Weed Smokers

Colorado Rolls Out PSAs to Keep Stoners in the Passenger Seat

By Michael Sebastian.

AdAge.com | Published on March 06, 2014

Drive High, Get a DUI campaign PSAs

Grilling high is legal: <http://bcove.me/6icx63sp>

Playing basketball high is legal: <http://bcove.me/7o0qyn64>

Hanging your new flat screen TV high is legal: <http://bcove.me/d8mksk8u>

Colorado is starting an ad campaign to prevent pot users from getting behind the wheel. Instead of vilifying the drug, which Colorado has legalized for recreational use, the campaign takes a light-hearted approach.

In one spot, for example, a young man slowly presses the ignition button on a gas grill over and over, to no effect, while a group of bemused friends looks on.

"Grilling high is now legal," appears on the screen. "Driving to get the propane you forgot isn't."

The three ads, which air from Mar. 10 through the week of Apr. 14, are necessary because of the new permissiveness around getting high, according Emily Wilfong, communications manager-safety programs at the Colorado Department of Transportation. "We now have increased access to marijuana in our state, which means more people on the roads with it," she said.

Frequent marijuana users drive under the influence an average of 17 times a month, according to information the Department of Transportation gleaned from phone surveys and focus groups.

The use of recreational marijuana became legal in Colorado on Jan. 1, making it the first state to implement such a law. Washington has also legalized recreational marijuana and plans to allow it this year. Sales have proven brisk, but ad sales around the new category seem to be lagging far behind.

The "Drive High, Get a DUI" campaign is costing the state nearly \$500,000, with \$340,000 of that spent on buying media, according to Ms. Wilfong. That's more than the \$325,000 Colorado typically spends on paid media for DUI ads, which mainly highlight drinking and driving.

Four Denver-based agencies handled the campaign, with Amelie Company overseeing creative, Explore Communications managing the media buy, Communications Infrastructure Group

leading PR efforts and Hispanidad working on ethnic marketing aimed at the state's Latino population.

The marijuana PSAs will run on TV in Denver, Boulder and Grand Junction as well as on the web. Posters will also appear in marijuana dispensaries. The Department of Transportation planned to introduce the campaign during a press conference Thursday afternoon.

A TV commercial for a service that pairs patients with doctors willing to recommend medical marijuana also began running on cable networks in New Jersey this month.