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In December of 2017, former City Council member Alan Schwartzman famously declared that "prohibition is over" in Benicia, as he held up a Time magazine with a cannabis leaf on the cover, leading to the development of ordinances to support the emerging new economic frontier of regulated and taxed cannabis commerce in our city. Cannabis commerce is now a leading edge component of our future economic trajectory, and Alan Schwartzman played a leading role in establishing policy consistent with voter preferences. Accordingly, April 20th, recognized nationally as a holiday for cannabis culture, should be proclaimed "Alan Schwartzman Day" in Benicia. The City Council has a meeting on 4/20 and honoring Schwartzman at that time would be apropos. I will be enjoying a fat bomber in his honor as the proclamation is read.

The Planning Commission will consider a use permit for a cannabis microbusiness at Benicia Industrial Park on March 11. Later this year, cultivators and manufacturers will be considered following staff reviews of permit applications. Benicia residents, especially career-minded young adults, are encouraged to keep their resumes polished and learn all they can about the plant and the products derived from it. Jobs in cannabis commerce continue to swell in America, with over 77 thousand new jobs added in 2020, bringing the national total to over 300 thousand FTE jobs. The explosive growth of cannabis industry jobs outpaces all occupations tracked by the US Department of Labor Statistics.

The city of Campbell, featured in a cost/benefit analysis by Lionel Largaespada in an effort to turn Benicia away from regulated cannabis, has evolved. Voters there approved a cannabis tax with 84 percent YES. Their city council has set the rate at 7 percent with a cap of no more than 15 percent as a precursor to regulated activity. Campbell staff has projected millions of dollars of revenue. Like other cities that have flipped, Campbell was leaking tax revenue badly to surrounding cities and wised up. They are now on track to repeal prohibition and start cashing in, and have indicated an interest in multiple dispensaries to maximize revenue potential. Within the next few years, there will be no Bay Area city banning cannabis. Benicia has led the way in regulating a popular consumer choice, and other cities are following our lead. Hooray for Benicia!

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