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## 'We don't need that much liquor in this town'

Dominick LaJoy, owner of House of Spirits, sets himself apart by carrying small, hard to find products from around the state. (Kylea Henseler/Montrose Daily Press)

### With decision looming, the local liquor industry speaks on potential City Market liquor license

By KYLEA HENSELER  
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On Tuesday, a ruling on spirits could dampen the Christmas spirit for many local liquor store owners and liquor producers.

Next year will be the 20th year in business for Montrose-born Jason Gordon and his father William. But, if City Market is granted a license to sell spirits at the next Montrose City Council meeting, it could be one of the last, not for the Gordons, but

for many liquor stores in town.

"We're doing everything we can to survive," Jason Gordon said. "I'm not sure how much of a hit we can take."

While at first glance the issue might seem like a question of convenience, or just an inevitable reality, local liquor store owners and liquor producers say there's a lot more to it. They hope the city will deny the license, and they believe it has a strong legal case to do so.

Council members first heard City Market's

application to sell liquor at the south location last week, along with around an hour of public comment from local business owners and concerned residents. Ultimately, they voted to table the issue, and had 30 days to pick it back up.

With the holidays coming, a decision is slated for Tuesday's council meeting, one that could either provide a big boost of holiday cheer to a lot of small town locals, or cast a Grinchy spell on the season.

Allowing City Market to sell spirits, in addition to the wine and beer already on shelves, would deal mom and pops a major blow. The impacts would cause a ripple effect, impacting not just liquor stores, but craft breweries and distilleries around the region. Liquor store owners believe the selection at City Market would be limited, while locals would lose out on honest work if they got the new license and local shops close.

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## Power generation code revision on hold – for now

### County denies amendment as opponents say it discriminates

By KATHARHYN HEIDELBERG  
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Montrose County commissioners on Wednesday weighed whether to add a zoning amendment addressing renewable power generation facilities, but in the end, rejected the proposed changes on a 2-1 vote, upon hearing a string of concerns.

The denial was to allow more time to consider concerns raised during the meeting, commissioners' own questions, and possibly to hold a hearing to extend a soon-to-expire moratorium on large-scale solar generation facilities. The decision does not necessarily preclude the adoption of a similar amendment later.

"The last thing we want to do is harm anybody in the county. That's not the intention; it's never been the intention. It was really to protect, and it wasn't to over-regulate, I assure you," Montrose County Commissioner Sue Hansen said.

In comments Wednesday and in earlier written comments, the public and renewable energy advocates lambasted the proposal as discriminatory and short-sighted.

"I'm just a little perplexed as to why the county would seemingly single out and target this one type of land development purpose while ignoring a lot

of issues that have similar impacts or worse impacts," said resident Ryan Sedgeley, ultimately calling on commissioners to take the regulations back to the drawing board and rethink them.

Sedgeley also sits on the Delta-Montrose Electric Association Board of Directors and later said he wasn't speaking for DMEA, but as a board member, is angling for ways to keep electricity costs lower and he feared overly burdensome regulations would have the opposite effect.

Sedgeley also said solar, for example, affords an opportunity for the county to get investment money and generate well-paying jobs, although Commissioner Roger Rash would later question just how many jobs solar plants create, since they can be run with far fewer employees than many other businesses.

Montrose County allows power generation facilities in the General Agricultural District by special use permit and in the General Industrial District as a use by right. Solar generation is not allowed, due to a 2022 moratorium on special use for power generation, defined in regulations then as solar energy facilities.

The moratorium has since been extended and is set to expire Jan. 10.

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## School board rejects charter school's application amidst list of concerns

### Montrose Classical Academy proponents prepare to push forward

By JEREMY MORRISON  
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A supporter of Montrose Classical Academy's bid for a charter school waded into Tuesday evening's big topic with a big idea, framing his comments to the Montrose County School District Board of Education through a scientific lens.

"Newton's first law: an object in motion stays in motion until met with an opposing force," said Forrest Faulconer, his young daughter leaning against his legs as they stood at the public lectern.

Just as they had in previous meetings centered on MCA's charter aspirations, school board members sat and listened, hearing once more from parents and

other community members interested in launching a charter in Montrose centered on a classical education curriculum.

"The greater the momentum, the more difficult it is to stop a moving object," Faulconer. "MCA has momentum."

Within the hour, however, this momentum would slowly grind to a halt, with the MCSD school board deciding to deny MCA's charter application. The denial was handed down via a split 4-3 vote.

"The board reviewed the MCA charter school application with care, considering diverse perspectives and prioritizing students' needs," MCSD Superintendent Dr. Carrie Stephenson said in a statement following the decision. "In

their discussion prior to voting, board members articulated the complexity and difficulty of the decision, emphasizing their ultimate commitment to doing what is best for Montrose County students and families."

Heading into the school board's Dec. 10 meeting, members were tasked with either approving MCA's charter application, denying it outright, or approving it with conditions. Board Vice President Stephen Bush noted how the issue had been a weighty matter during the months of public discussion leading up to this final determination.

"I've contemplated this back and forth for months," he said. "I wake up in the middle of the



Forrest Faulconer, his young daughter by his side, speaks to the MCSD Board of Education Dec. 10 prior to the board's decision concerning MCA's charter school application. (Jeremy Morrison/Montrose Daily Press)

night thinking about it." Bush said he had once considered hinging his approval on a list of

conditions and benchmarks that MCA would need to meet, but that he eventually determined

that the conditions were too many.

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