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The Progress-Index

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Illegal Chinese vapes funneled into U.S.



The supply chain ferrying illegal Chinese-made vapes into the United States mostly operates in plain sight.
PHOTOS BY CBP/HANDOUT VIA REUTERS

Analysis finds billions of dollars in imports unaccounted for

Emma Rumney, Kaylee Kang and Tom Polansek
REUTERS

CHICAGO – From an office a 15-minute drive from Chicago’s O’Hare International Airport, one small firm helped import millions of unauthorized Chinese-made vapes last year alone, forming a key link in the supply chain feeding U.S. demand for illegal e-cigarettes.

In a little over four years, the firm, a customs brokerage run by a man named Jay Kim, became a go-to broker for the Chinese vape industry. The firm worked on 60% of all shipments of vapes and vape parts from China to the United States in 2024 registered by the Food and Drug Administration, according to a Reuters analysis.

“A lot of them have FDA authorization,” Kim said in an interview in his office in April, referring to the vape shipments his firm handled.

However, FDA data on imports into the U.S. of FDA-regulated goods such as tobacco products or medicines showed the products Kim’s firm helped bring into the United States included unauthorized brands like Lost Mary and Geek Bar.

The FDA has declared those brands illegal to import or sell, warning their array of fruit and candy flavors may appeal to children. The agency says nicotine can harm developing brains and impact attention, learning and mood in young people, who can get hooked more easily on the addictive chemical.

See VAPES, Page 2A



Unauthorized Chinese-made vapes were seized in a raid outside of Chicago by members of the Food and Drug Administration and U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

National Battlefield road work closures announced

Kristi K. Higgins
Petersburg Progress-Index
USA TODAY NETWORK

Petersburg National Battlefield has scheduled road work to begin in August. This work will address serious sinkholes, preserve pavement, and restripe roads and parking lots.

The Eastern Front Tour Road will be closed to vehicles south of Route 36 from August 20 to September 9. The visitor centers will remain open during this time.

The road work is expected to continue through November 20. Additional short-term road closures throughout the park will take place at various times, including a two-day closure at the Eastern Front Visitor Center. For the latest updates on road conditions, view park alerts section of the park website at nps.gov/pete.

See ROAD, Page 2A

Ticks: How to protect from being bitten

Kristi K. Higgins
Petersburg Progress-Index
USA TODAY NETWORK

Ticks are tiny and hard to spot. Bites from the arachnids can be both irritating and harmful to your health. They spread diseases that affect humans and can cause serious medical problems such as Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Babesiosis and Alpha-gal.

The Chesterfield Health District, one of 35 health districts made up of 119 local health departments in the Virginia Department of Health [VDH], shared several ways with The Progress-Index readers on how to protect themselves and prevent tick bites.

- Use insect repellent containing either DEET, picaridin or lemon eucalyptus, when outdoors. Always follow instructions on the product label.

See TICKS, Page 2A

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